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POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN PUBLIC PERSONNEL  
ADMINISTRATION

*Report of the Committee on  
Public Relations of Public Personnel Agencies  
of the  
Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada*

**PUBLIC RELATIONS OF  
PUBLIC PERSONNEL AGENCIES**

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# **PUBLIC RELATIONS OF PUBLIC PERSONNEL AGENCIES**

*A Report Submitted to the*  
**CIVIL SERVICE ASSEMBLY**

*By the Committee on*  
*Public Relations of Public Personnel Agencies*

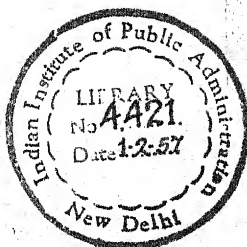
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## Foreword

THE management of governmental affairs has become increasingly important as the activities of governments have grown in magnitude and broadened in scope, particularly during the last quarter of a century. This has led inevitably to an intensification of interest in problems relating to personnel administration—a function that is an essential and integral part of over-all management. The rapid extension and improvement of merit systems in national, state, and local governments and the renewed interest of many important groups in public personnel problems have marked this development during the last few years. All interested groups, including public personnel workers themselves, have long felt the serious need for a searching review and appraisal of existing personnel policies and practices and the formulation of proposals for the more complete and satisfactory performance of personnel activities. Plans for meeting this need were approved by the Executive Council of the Civil Service Assembly in 1937. The present report is one of a series which, when completed, will bring together for the first time a set of authoritative and forward-looking volumes dealing with the major phases of public personnel administration.

More than sixty outstanding personnel officials, general administrators, technical and research workers, educators, and representatives of civic, professional, and employee groups actively participated in the preliminary planning of this huge undertaking. It was agreed that the final findings and reports resulting from this comprehensive effort would be based upon special field studies of public personnel policies and practices, which would be supplemented by information obtained from existing studies and reports dealing with personnel problems and by the ideas and suggestions of those who were in a position to make helpful contributions because of their training or experience. It was further agreed that the reports should not be the work

of one person, or of a small group of persons, professing omniscience in the field. It was felt that the final reports should be the product of group effort and group thinking, which could be realized through the appointment of a series of committees whose members would give their time, energies, and ideas to make the undertaking successful.

To collect and appraise facts regarding present public personnel policies and practices, a specially recruited staff conducted field studies covering twenty-two different public personnel agencies selected because of their differences in size, location, and problems. In each jurisdiction one or more members of this field staff conducted intensive interviews with personnel administrators, technicians, departmental administrators and supervisors, political leaders, and representatives of organized employee associations. Approximately four hundred persons were interviewed during the course of the field studies. Complete notes were made of these interviews. Information and suggestions obtained in this way were supplemented by a careful study and review of other materials, such as: appropriate legislation; annual and special reports of the personnel agencies; special studies and memoranda regarding the work of the personnel agencies which had been prepared by outside organizations and disinterested persons; personnel tests, forms, records, statistics, and methods; and finally, actual observations of the agencies' operations. On many occasions, significant and helpful documentary material not ordinarily available to a researcher was placed at the disposal of the field staff.

As a result of this work, a detailed case history was prepared for each agency covered by the survey. Each case history included statements of fact regarding the personnel policies and practices of the agency; ideas and suggestions obtained from those interviewed, from reports, and from other sources; a critical appraisal of the policies and practices of the agency as they were actually working; and suggestions for changes and improvements which originated with those interviewed or members of the survey staff. The information and suggestions included in each case history were gathered and organized according to a

prearranged plan that made it possible to classify the material into broad categories corresponding to certain major aspects of public personnel administration.

The case histories and all other available materials were then placed in the hands of a number of committees for use as basic information in the preparation of final reports. Each committee was given the task of preparing a report dealing with a specified functional subject in the field of public personnel administration. In addition to the case histories, the committees were given access to supplementary descriptive and interpretative material regarding many agencies not covered by the field survey; special reports and theses relating to the work of personnel agencies and to technical and administrative problems in personnel administration; selected bibliographies; and other materials brought together by the Assembly's Headquarters Office in connection with its regular activities as a clearing house in the field of public personnel administration. Committee chairmen and members were encouraged to augment this material by consulting with persons and groups who were in a position to make substantial contributions of ideas and facts and by conducting special investigations and researches. Through the occasional issuance of memoranda and special notes, all committee members were kept currently informed of the progress being made and the problems being faced by participants in the undertaking.

Following a procedure approved by the Assembly's Executive Council regarding each committee, one person was appointed by the President of the Assembly to serve as chairman of an advisory committee to prepare an appropriate report on the particular subject or phase of public personnel administration assigned to it. The members of each committee were chosen because of their interest in, and knowledge of, the matter falling within the committee's general jurisdiction, and because of the diverse viewpoints which they could bring to the committee's work. More than three hundred persons have served on the several committees. About one-half of them are persons actively engaged in public personnel administration. The other half are general administrators, educators, industrial personnel workers,

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and leading members or representatives of civic and professional groups, governmental research associations, and employee organizations.

It has been the responsibility of each chairman to initiate and coordinate the activities of his committee. The work methods of the several chairmen have naturally differed. Some have used their committees largely as sounding boards on various problems or proposals referred to them and have asked committee members to review outlines and manuscripts and to offer their comments, criticisms, and suggestions for the purpose of injecting the influence of their composite views and experiences into the final reports. Others have asked individual committee members to assume the task of bringing together all necessary material regarding a particular segment of the committee's assignment and to prepare a corresponding section of the final report. It has been the chairman's responsibility, without obtaining formal action by the committee, to reconcile differences of approach and to mold his own ideas and materials and those submitted by his committee members into a final integrated report. This procedure has made it possible for each report to represent the collective contributions of outstanding thinkers and doers in public personnel administration, and of persons engaged in other fields who have the vision, imagination, and freedom from professional introversion to propound the broad principles and objectives that should determine the role of personnel administration in the over-all scheme of public affairs.

At the very inception of the undertaking, it was stressed that each report should represent a synthesis of the most effective and desirable policies and practices on a particular phase of public personnel administration. It was contemplated that each report would be more than a mere tallying of existing practices and malpractices, and that it would thus be qualitative rather than quantitative. It was also agreed that each report would not only carry the story of the effective steps which had been taken by personnel agencies to reach certain objectives, but would go further and project beyond present policies and practices to more desirable or acceptable ones.

Any statement regarding the undertaking would be incomplete without acknowledgment of the substantial and effective help given by the staff of the Assembly's Headquarters Office. Maxwell A. DeVoe was responsible for the immediate supervision of the special field staff originally engaged in gathering needed information for the undertaking and for coordinating the efforts of the several committees participating in the preparation of final reports. He was ably assisted in his work by Jeremiah Donovan, John Steven, and Doris Haney Jones. Henry F. Hubbard played an important and effective part in the preliminary planning of the undertaking and in its subsequent development. To James M. Mitchell has fallen the difficult task of helping to bring a number of reports through the process of final committee consideration and ultimate publication. Sincerest appreciation is hereby tendered to the many public spirited persons who, without compensation, took an active and helpful part in planning this undertaking and bringing it to its present stage of completion. The Assembly is grateful to the copyright holders who have permitted the quotation of copyrighted materials in the report. Acknowledgment is made for the assistance rendered by Public Administration Service throughout the process of printing and publishing this report. Great help and much useful information has been made available to the Assembly in connection with this effort by the associations of public agencies and public officials located in the same building with the Assembly's Headquarters Office at 1313 East 60th Street, Chicago, as well as by various other organizations throughout the country. The entire undertaking was made possible through the finances generously provided by the Spelman Fund of New York.

The limited amount of time that committee chairmen and members could take away from their regular activities for the purpose of carrying forward the undertaking and unforeseeable difficulties encountered by the different committees have made it impossible for all reports of the series to be finished simultaneously or in schematic order. It has therefore been decided to publish the reports, for the most part, in the order of their completion.

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This report, *Public Relations of Public Personnel Agencies*, like all others of the series, is a document which a committee has submitted to the Civil Service Assembly. The information and recommendations presented in its pages represent the collective thinking of the chairman and his committee. The report was not prepared with a view toward official approval or formal adoption by the Civil Service Assembly, its Executive Council, or its Headquarters staff, and no action of this nature is contemplated. It is, however, as forward-looking and authoritative as the chairman and his associates have been able to make it.

G. LYLE BELSLEY, *Director*  
Civil Service Assembly



## Preface

THE following report is the work of many hands and many heads. Not only members of the Committee, but others who had no official connection with the Committee, have contributed generously. The primary contribution comes from Robert L. Oshins, who was temporarily attached as research aid to the staff of the Maxwell Graduate School at Syracuse University. Mr. Oshins drew up the original outline and prepared the first rough draft of the report itself. The Committee is under obligation to Mr. Oshins for this basic contribution. He worked under the supervision of the Chairman and Dr. Herman C. Beyle, a member of the Committee who has already won a place for himself in the field of public reporting. Elliott S. Wingert conducted the field work for parts of the report. Stuart H. Van Dyke, research assistant of the Maxwell Graduate School, assisted in editing the manuscript.

The Committee would also express its appreciation to Professor Kenneth Bartlett of the Radio Workshop at Syracuse University, who contributed the chapter on the use of the radio; Professor William C. Prout of the School of Speech, Syracuse University, who contributed the chapter on public speech; Paul J. Kern, President of the New York City Civil Service Commission, who contributed the section on the relations between the personnel agency and the executive; and to Byron F. Field of Cleveland, Richard Cooper of the Farm Credit Administration, and John Devine of the American Film Center, from whose writings we have quoted at some length.

Members of the Committee who prepared special sections of the report are H. Eliot Kaplan, Roy F. Hendrickson, Professor Herman C. Beyle, Wallace S. Sayre, and John Steven.

WILLIAM E. MOSHER

Syracuse, N. Y.  
January, 1941



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**PART I**

**The Publics of  
the Personnel Agency**



## Introduction

AS A POINT of departure, the series of reports prepared under the auspices of the Civil Service Assembly assumes that the personnel division of a governmental jurisdiction is more than an employment and record-keeping agency. In more progressive jurisdictions the civil service commission, which in the past concentrated attention almost exclusively on recruitment, examinations, and the promulgation of eligible lists, is now undertaking more and more of the functions of a staff division for personnel administration. In private businesses, such divisions are concerned either directly or indirectly with conditions affecting personnel throughout the service. For example, many a personnel division is now vested with responsibility for the development of training programs in all branches of the organization of which it is a part. Its activity may consist of stimulation or advice in some instances, and in the actual conduct of the training program in others.

The following analysis and recommendations on the subject of public relations are to be considered in relation to this broad background and framework. It must be obvious that public relations for an agency interested primarily in recruitment can be charted in a rather restricted circle, while those for a staff agency charged with the comprehensive functions of a general personnel division will be much more varied and extensive. This consideration is of basic importance for an understanding of the treatment of the subject in the present report.

In a democracy the importance of public relations can hardly be overstressed. The ultimate test of success and the ultimate guarantee of permanency of democratic government are to be found in the approval of its citizenry. For this approval, not only must the service itself be adequate and satisfactory, but information as to government activities must be widely disseminated and citizen interest aroused. On the whole, public authorities

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have signally failed to keep their "masters," the public, acquainted with their enterprises and the problems for which they are responsible. This generalization applies with few qualifications to the divisions specially charged with personnel functions. The following statement recently made with reference to the merit system in Tennessee has wide application:

Lack of success of the merit system in Tennessee was the result not so much of the type of agency established as it was lack of support on the part of the people and administration. . . . Too many people in the state are not yet convinced that they want a system of personnel administration based on merit. The successful administration of the merit system in government, like any other important development, depends upon education and understanding.<sup>1</sup>

The scope of public relations, as we conceive it, involves much more than the mere dissemination of information. The term is here taken in a most literal sense as covering all relations with the public. The acts of service, whatever they may be, as well as the bearing and behavior of those performing them, should be satisfactory to the public. Satisfaction is a subjective state. To determine its presence or absence calls for expression on the part of those served. An enlightened public relations policy will, therefore, seek to discover the state of mind of the public concerned—by facilitating the expression of suggestions and grievances, by attitude and opinion investigations, and by other means that have been developed by the more progressive commercial concerns interested in consumer reactions.

This phase of public relations has been pretty generally neglected by public authorities. As their functions expand and their techniques grow more involved, officials become more and more absorbed in the technical aspects of their tasks. A cursory review of the programs of the annual conferences of national associations of public officials will show how little consideration is given to the problems arising on the consumer side of the ledger. Thus a self-centered and self-sufficient bureaucracy comes into being. The public is expected to take what is good for it and like it. Consumer analysis, a well recognized function of alert

<sup>1</sup>W. H. Combs and W. C. Cole, "Tennessee Experiments with the Merit System," *National Municipal Review*, April 1939, p. 287.

business concerns, is the best corrective for the malady of "self-centeredness" with which bureaucracies are prone to be afflicted. A self-governing people and a self-sufficient bureaucracy are contradictions in terms. If self-government is to endure it behooves those carrying on the responsibilities of government to take systematic precautions against this affliction. Later sections of this report will deal specifically with this aspect of public relations.

There is peculiar need for a progressive public relations policy in personnel agencies because they are defending that sector of the government front which is in sore need of alert and intelligent public support. Although considerable progress has been made in limiting the struggle between the administrator and the patronage monger, American mores are still not unkindly disposed to the use of public office for the payment of political debts. All too many good Americans continue to accept this practice as a necessary evil, inherent in a democratic system. Or, if some sort of merit principle has been adopted through legislative action, they take it for granted that the problem has been permanently solved. Both states of mind should be constant challenges to any division of personnel. The merit system must win public support over and over again. Its opponents are ever on the alert; they are resourceful in devising ways of undermining it; they are playing for high stakes. Therefore, we hold that the public relations policies of the personnel division are of greater significance than those of other special divisions of government.

The purpose of this report is to explore the broad field of public relations from the point of view of the personnel agency, and to consider devices that may be used in the development of a sound and comprehensive public relations policy, in the light of practices used by such agencies as have given attention to this phase of their responsibility.

#### DEFINITION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations have to do with the development and maintenance by any legitimate means of favorable attitudes on the

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part of the people with whom an agency comes into contact. The ideology of public relations springs from the fields of individual and social psychology, which deal with the ways in which attitudes are formed and changed. Working tools have been developed by a wide range of practitioners, educators, public relations counsel, statisticians, specialists in public reporting, students of human relationships, and experts in the use of various publicity media such as the press, radio, movies, and exhibits. This ideology and these skills, added together and leavened with a considerable amount of common sense, comprise the subject matter of public relations.

The early emphasis upon governmental reporting stressed "the pitching end of the game." Students and practitioners of public reporting were chiefly concerned with a one-way flow of influencing; and the influencing was to be accomplished by the book-man's technique. Later when the emphasis passed from governmental reporting to governmental publicity, the stress still remained on the "pitching" rather than the "catching." With publicity work, however, all sorts of curves were to be thrown. The influencing was to be accomplished through media of all kinds. More recently when emphasis has again passed on, this time to the work of public relations, the stress has been placed upon the "catching as well as the pitching end of the game."

In so far as public relations work is anything more than reporting and publicity, it is stress upon three lines of activity. The first of these is that of systematic self-criticism, "trouble shooting" inside the business or governmental organization to determine what red tape, what official actions and attitudes, or what unnecessary frictions may be responsible for unwanted attitudes and reactions on the part of the customer or citizen.

As a parallel to this interest in self-criticism, the second line of activity inherent in the public relations movement is that of systematic exploration of the attitudes of customers or citizens. If relations are to be improved, it becomes exceedingly important to find out exactly what is on the mind of a representative sample of customers or citizens. Thus it would be possible to

determine what reformation or explanation needs to be accomplished or might be effective. This is the phase of the public relations movement which has opened the one-way street of reporting and publicity to a two-way flow of influencing.

On the basis of systematic self-criticism and systematic assessment of customer or citizen attitudes, the third aspect of public relations can be intelligently accomplished. It is that of effecting the necessary readjustments and of formulating and presenting the needed explanation or appeal. This is more than a mere matter of semantics. It is intelligently and soundly based cooperation of officer and citizen in a common enterprise of business or government. A two-way street of public relations work can greatly improve government and planning for good government.

As suggested above, the term "public relations" is not to be considered as meaning only "publicity." However the latter may be defined, public relations embrace publicity as only *one* of several major methods. The term "public relations" denotes a policy which has to do with any and all contacts with the public, from the method of announcing an examination to the manner in which a counter clerk directs an inquirer to the tax assessor's office.

Publicity is accepted in this report as a major feature in any public relations program. Hence it may be well at this point to discriminate between educational and informational publicity which is legitimate, and propaganda, which, so far as this study is concerned, is considered to be illegitimate publicity. First let it be granted that a public agency should forego the use of propaganda—therefore the qualifying adjective, "illegitimate." Certain criteria have been proposed whereby propaganda may be identified.<sup>2</sup> It is not our intention to review these criteria. May it suffice to point out one which is basic. This is the criterion of straightforwardness and honesty. The propagandist is wont to tell but part of the story, to overplay certain of its phases that are to his advantage, or to underplay those that are to his disadvantage. Let those in charge of governmental publicity avoid

<sup>2</sup>Herman C. Beyle, "Attempts to Influence Attitudes," Chapter XVIII, in Mosher and Associates, *Introduction to Responsible Citizenship* (1941).

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these pitfalls. With this qualification, they are not only justified but under obligation to tell the public what they are doing, and what are their methods, accomplishments, objectives, and needs.

### GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS

In approaching the problem of public relations the following assumptions are made:

1. There is not just "the public," but many and varied publics representing a wide range of interests and making a variety of demands.
2. Because of the various publics concerned, the public relations program must be broken down into a number of elements. No single report or activity will be sufficient, but rather there must be a comprehensive system which covers each of the publics.
3. This program must be based upon the presentation of information which flows readily from the records of the agency.
4. Since considerable competition exists for the attention of the public, the governmental agency must use techniques of presentation that are at least as effective as those of its rivals.
5. Public relations is concerned not only with publicity of a more or less formal character but also with personal contacts of every sort between public officials and employees and members of the public. Surprisingly little attention has been paid to this aspect of public relations. Obviously, the most telling impressions gained by the public are in connection with those immediate personal contacts with officials and employees acting in both their official and unofficial capacities.
6. Public relations involves a flow of information and understanding not alone from the agency to the publics, but from the publics to the agency. There must be a "two-way street."

### OBSTACLES

Certain difficulties must be recognized in the administration of so broad a program. They are:

1. The complexity of modern government
2. The usually indifferent attitude of the general public



3. The lack of appreciation on the part of many public officials of the importance of their responsibility in the matter of public relations
4. The lack of objective indices to measure the effectiveness of the methods used
5. The limited funds available for public relations activities and the consequent necessity of foregoing professional technical assistance
6. The difficulty of maintaining impartiality
7. The difficulty of persuading the public that public relations devices are not necessarily propaganda
8. The honest fear that "rugged individualists" have of too much government, and their tendency to interpret all governmental publicity as propaganda

#### SUMMARY OF PRESENT PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES OF PERSONNEL AGENCIES

At the present time the typical public personnel agency limits its activities in the field of public relations to two simple functions. The first has to do with advertisements and announcements of impending examinations, and the second with the annual report. In many instances both are prescribed in the act creating the agency. Although certain civil service commissions have utilized novel methods of bringing the employment needs of their jurisdictions to the attention of prospective recruits, practices for the most part have been limited to cut-and-dried newspaper announcements and stereotyped bulletins posted in public places and forwarded to selected mailing lists. The typical annual report, on the other hand, is made up of a routine introduction, data as to the number of applicants, number passed, number failed, and other statistics. Such material is not designed for public consumption and makes but little if any appeal to public interest.

Although several efforts to improve reports have been made, no generally accepted standard for the form and content of annual reports has yet been worked out. In the main, what has been done bears the stamp of the "expert" and expresses what, in the

expert's opinion, the public ought to know rather than what the public can and will absorb. Furthermore, there is almost complete lack of agreement among those who have taken the trouble to make suggestions in regard to the annual report. For example, the recommendations of fifteen different experts as to the contents of personnel reports were canvassed with the following results: 440 separate items were suggested by at least one of the experts; two or more agreed upon 156, three or more on 106, four or more on 52, and five or more on only 26. Investigation as to the availability of materials under the items recommended shows that in many cases the data are not at hand, particularly the unit cost items and comparable ratios which were frequently suggested.

To review this outline of a comprehensive public relations program and contrast it with customary practices, is to be impressed with the need of systematic action on a number of fronts, some of which have not been any too thoroughly explored. It is the Committee's intention to carry on such explorations.

## *Chapter I*

### **The Variety of Publics and Their Attitudes**

**B**ROADLY stated, there are as many "publics" as there are persons. A defender of this interpretation lists the following as the major publics: the press, the schools, the layman public, the executive, the administrative and operating heads, and the rank and file employees. He suggests further that specifications be drawn up concerning appropriate methods for dealing with each of these publics. In our approach we have considered it advisable to pass over certain of these publics in the thought that the methods of contact can be handled better in other committee reports on specific functions of which public relations are a part. There are, however, a number of major areas of public relations that quite properly fall within the span of this report. These will be outlined broadly in the following pages.

#### **SPECIAL PUBLICS OF THE PERSONNEL AGENCY**

The field of administrative reporting certainly comes within the assignment of this Committee. Reference will later be made to the circulation of materials on personnel matters that will be of interest to administrative heads.

In any thorough analysis of the field of public relations, attention should be given to the contacts of the personnel agency with other organizations and individuals in its own professional sphere. These persons and groups will be interested both in administrative reporting and in the technical aspects of personnel and examination procedures. The Civil Service Assembly is already serving as a clearing house for information of this sort and is encouraging its members to utilize its facilities further. It is of the utmost importance that personnel technicians acquaint

one another with experiments being carried on in their respective organizations. To promote such interchange of information might well be one of the incidental functions of a public relations specialist appointed to serve the personnel agency.

The legislature is a public which occupies a unique and very important position with respect to the personnel agency. Any personnel agency aware of its own interest will keep the members of the legislative body continuously informed about the agency's accomplishments, problems, and goals. Legislators stand midway between the administrative staff and the general public. If well advised, the personnel agency will list the legislative body on its public relations docket and make material available to the legislators that is specially designed for their needs.

Those groups and individuals who constitute the potential employment market from which new employees are to be drawn form another public which is of particular interest to the personnel agency. Among such groups, educational institutions deserve special attention because of their importance as a reservoir of recruits and as a potent force in determining the attitude of the rising generation toward the public service. Methods of developing interest among prospective candidates for the public service are being explored by the Civil Service Assembly's committee reporting on the subject of recruiting.<sup>1</sup> Detailed discussion of this subject is therefore omitted from the present report.

The representatives of newspapers and the managers of broadcasting stations may be looked upon as a special public because of their importance as disseminators of information and news. Contacts with members of these groups must be cultivated, and continuous attention given to the methods of selecting, organizing, and presenting material that will appeal to them.

#### THE PERSONNEL AGENCY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Finally, we come to the general public, whose viewpoints and attitudes are properly the concern of every government department but are of particular concern to the civil service agency.

<sup>1</sup> See report of Committee on Positive Recruitment, a companion volume in this series.

The personnel agency's work normally involves a wide range of contacts with the general public, and its success in recruitment depends to a large extent upon what the general public thinks of the government service. Indeed, one of the most challenging obstacles to building up first-class personnel in the recent past has been the prevailing attitude of the great body of Americans toward the public service. The personnel agency has, therefore, a peculiar opportunity to make this attitude more sympathetic and favorable.

The general public may for convenience be divided into the rank and file of the citizenry and the pressure groups. The latter present a formidable problem in public relations. They may be divided, in turn, into two classes: (1) the "pro-civil service" groups, and (2) the "antis." Among the former are the civil service associations, the League of Women Voters, and a wide variety of civic and reform organizations. Among the antis are the old line politicians who are constitutionally opposed to the merit system, as well as many in the rank and file of the citizenry who accept spoils as inevitable or as a matter of course. Certain groups are sometimes "pro" and sometimes "anti." Among these the taxpayers' organizations and, on some measures, the associations of public employees quite definitely stand out.

If the public relations division of the personnel agency analyzes its task carefully, it will discover that its program of public relations touches not one public but a number of publics, and that, like any producer of consumption goods, it must bear in mind the likes and dislikes as well as the peculiarities of different consumer groups. The situation calls for a variety of techniques and devices, methods of approach, and emphases.

In the following chapters we propose to survey the various media of public relations. In the main we shall be concerned with the general public, since it is most important and since most of the standard media applicable to it need only to be varied in one direction or another to be suitable for other publics as well.

## *Chapter II*

### **Relations Between the Personnel Agency and Special Publics**

CERTAIN of the publics are of particular importance because of their peculiar relationship to the personnel agency. Among these are (1) members of the legislative body, (2) the chief executive, (3) operating officials, (4) employees in the service, (5) educational institutions, (6) interest and pressure groups, and (7) the press. Before discussing the personnel agency's relations with these publics, it is well to mention again the fact that the personnel agency is something more than a mere employment office. It is a general staff agency concerned with personnel problems in all departments of government. Its activities, therefore, are considerably more diverse and far-reaching than would be the case if it simply stood guard at the entrance and exit gates.

#### **RELATIONS WITH LEGISLATORS AND LEGISLATIVE BODIES**

In no part of its public relations program does the personnel agency have a more delicate task than in its relations with the legislative branch of the government. Usually the agency is the creature of the legislature—and often a creature established unwillingly or reluctantly under public pressure. Ostensibly an independent nonpartisan agency of government, the personnel agency is often viewed by the individual law-maker as a part of the administration in power and directly responsible to it. It is no secret that in some jurisdictions the politically minded executives and legislators use the personnel agency as a cloak for manipulating appointments in the interest of patronage.

Through its power to alter the civil service law under which the agency operates, the legislative body determines in general

the personnel policy of the jurisdiction concerned. The legislature may broaden or curtail the authority of the personnel agency within the limits of any constitutional or charter provisions that may exist. It can make it possible for the agency to establish and administer a real merit system, or it can effectively prevent it from becoming more than a rubber stamp for the party in control. Furthermore, the agency must depend on the legislative body for adequate appropriations to carry on its work.

These and other cogent considerations make it essential for the personnel agency to establish good relations not only with the legislature as a whole but also with its individual members. Those who have had experience with legislatures appreciate the practical value of maintaining the good will of the legislators. Establishing and maintaining such relationships need not influence the personnel agency to compromise the merit principle, nor will deliberate and complete aloofness aid it in working out problems which involve legislative action. After all, the personnel agency, like all other divisions of government, must deal with legislators both individually and collectively. It cannot afford to be "taken in" by them; neither can it afford to ignore them.

There is little information in the annual reports or other releases of personnel agencies that throws much light on the policies of the agencies in their relations with the legislature. Public relations programs of most personnel agencies ignore this relationship entirely. That this is so is not astonishing. Most of the problems in this field have arisen through exceptional situations, involving in most instances personal and confidential discussions or only man-to-man contacts. These peculiar or unique situations hardly lend themselves to analytical treatment.

#### *Attitudes of Legislative Bodies*

Often the action of the legislature or the attitude of individual members reflects the point of view of the public generally or of some pressure group. Sometimes the attitude is a reaction

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to what the personnel agency has done or contemplates doing. In one state, for example, the personnel agency sought to keep the number of eligibles within reasonable bounds and to discourage less competent candidates from taking examinations. It wished to get the younger, more talented, and better trained candidates to compete, and to make the public service a real career. The reaction in the legislature was almost spontaneous. Because the law-makers believed that the personnel agency had gone much too far in reducing the maximum entrance age of candidates, they went to the other extreme and sought to prohibit any age requirement whatever for entrance into the service. Ultimately the extreme legislative view prevailed and the prohibitory bill became law. It is reasonable to assume that if some systematic attention had been given to informing the individual legislators about the subject, the outcome would have been different. To establish the case for a reduction of the maximum age would have been a relatively simple matter.

In another state the same problem arose. An extremely obnoxious measure came before the legislature. Fortunately, the sponsors of the proposal in the legislature were properly informed in sufficient time to have the bill amended into much more reasonable form. In still another state jurisdiction, where a similar proposal was sponsored, the bill got nowhere. In large measure this was the result of the sound public relations policy of the personnel agency, which had built up its prestige with the legislature by direct contact with the individual members.

Not infrequently the attitude of the legislature, and even more so the action of a legislative committee, has been the result of a single legislator's pet grievance against the personnel agency. "Legislative courtesy," if nothing else, plays into the hands of the recalcitrant legislator who abominates the personnel agency and all its works. By making a personal issue of the matter he is generally able to persuade the legislative committee to kill important bills urged by the personnel agency as necessary for proper administration of the merit system. Oddly enough, the legislator who is strongly opposed to a measure for personal



reasons is usually more influential than the legislator who favors a bill but is not personally and directly concerned in it. For that reason, if for no other, it is important that the personnel agency avoid, if at all possible, arousing the personal antagonism of individual members of the legislature. There is enough opportunity for misunderstanding and friction between the agency and individual legislators without inviting it.

The history of one case will emphasize the point. The head of a division in a large state refused to have any contact with members of the legislature for fear that he would be imprompted to do something against the best interests of the state. He was sincerely imbued with the belief that his unit was strictly a business organization which should have nothing to do with the "politicians in the legislature." His philosophy of administration went to such an extreme, it was reported, that he had actually refused even to talk over the telephone to certain members of the legislature, much less discuss matters with them at his or their offices. The result was that the personnel agency became the target for a campaign of opposition fostered by two or three legislators. Soon the agency was thoroughly "reorganized" and its head was impelled to take his leave. It may be that this would have occurred in any event, but there is no doubt whatever that the shortsighted policy of the head was largely responsible for the "reorganization," despite his ability and public-spiritedness.

Many a personnel agency has had its appropriations drastically reduced because of the animosity of some member of the appropriations committee—often as a result of the refusal of the personnel agency to favor the legislator. It maintained its standards and suffered the penalty. In such action the agency is fully justified. At the same time, the personnel agency has often been responsible for the lack of enthusiasm for its work on the part of the appropriations committee. Not infrequently members of this committee fail to appreciate the significance and importance of the agency's work. But rarely, if this is the case, has the agency attempted to establish sound working relations with the appropriations committee or one of its influ-

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ential members. In view of this, it is small wonder that personnel agencies are inadequately financed. No practical policy for developing satisfactory relations with legislative committees has been formulated. Actually there is too much avoidance of any contact with important legislative committees because of a fear that the personnel agency may later be imposed on by the legislators.

A few years ago, one state civil service commission lost an excellent opportunity to obtain a much needed appropriation because of its failure to explain its needs intelligently and convincingly. Two years later the increase was approved by the legislative committee without any ado, but only after the committee came to understand the real work and problems of the personnel agency and to appreciate the utter necessity for the increase. This was accomplished largely by a friendly conference between the members of the commission and two or three legislative leaders, including the chairman of the finance committee. Because most legislative bodies are reluctant to increase appropriations for executive departments, and even more reluctant to do so for personnel agencies, it is incumbent upon the latter to maintain the good will of the legislators through every legitimate channel and approach.

Legislation affecting the personnel agency or some phase of its administration is ordinarily handled by a special committee of the legislature or by one or two general committees. In the latter case it is customary to refer such legislation to a subcommittee for study and consideration. The personnel agency should make it a routine function to establish cordial relations with the special committee or subcommittee or some influential member who has indicated an interest in the agency's work.

### *Keeping Legislators Informed*

A few personnel divisions have attempted to maintain sound public relations with the legislatures by supplying the members intermittently with general information about their work or specific data relating to the personnel problems of the state or local jurisdiction. Others have published monthly bulletins

describing the more important phases of the agencies' work and special developments in the personnel field, largely for the education of individual legislators. By and large, however, it appears that only casual, if any, attention has been paid by personnel agencies to this important aspect of public relations.

A state personnel agency in the West sends each member of the legislature an attractive kit containing general information about the agency, the application and other forms used, and a summary of its work. It thus seeks to make the legislators aware of its procedures and methods, and to educate them as to the significance of some of the major problems that have come before the agency, meanwhile encouraging the legislators to seek further information on any phase of the personnel problem in which they may be interested.

One of the state commissions in the Middle West publishes a monthly bulletin which discusses personnel problems and developments in the state. This is designed primarily to keep the legislators informed about the major problems with which the commission deals. Another state commission in the East transmits to the law-makers a brief statement of the practical effect that proposed legislation, if approved, might have on the administration of the merit system.

Most commissions publish an annual report; others publish special reports; and still others issue monthly bulletins. These are often used to bring to the attention of the legislators the work and problems of the personnel agency. Education of the legislators, however, in most instances is only an incidental purpose of the report, pamphlet, or bulletin. Unless the annual reports are made more attractive and readable and emphasize certain important features of the commission's work, so that he who runs may read, they generally will not receive much attention. Legislators are inundated by reports, literature, and letters. They have no time to read lengthy, detailed presentations. It is better to send them a summary which they can read quickly and grasp readily than to send a report which discourages attention by its length. Another commendable practice is to send a marked copy of the report or bulletin, calling the

reader's attention to a few features of the commission's work which have a particular appeal to him.

### *Direct Contacts*

Recently the United States Civil Service Commission designated one of its staff members as the Commission's liaison officer with the Civil Service Committee of the House of Representatives. His headquarters during Congressional sessions are in the Committee's office. He furnishes such information or data as the Committee may need, and sits in during its discussions of proposed legislation affecting the federal civil service. As a consequence, there has been far greater cooperation between the Commission and the Committee than ever before. More thorough and intelligent consideration of proposed legislation by the Committee has resulted in readier acceptance of sound measures and the disapproval of immature proposals.

This type of contact work must be handled with tact and discretion. It is no job for amateurs. Legislators will suspect the personnel agency's motives and soon ignore the agency's representative if they find he is being used as a lobbyist. It is safer to stay out of the legislative halls entirely than to become mere lobbyists. Suspicion of partisan activity on the part of the personnel agency will inevitably lead to grave trouble.

The agency should endeavor to learn who are friends of the merit system among the legislators and cultivate them. It should supply them from time to time with factual information that may be useful in explaining and defending meritorious measures, and for combating attacks on the agency or the merit system. Occasional conferences with leaders of the legislature, on both majority and minority sides, offer the agency an opportunity to help build proper legislative attitudes toward the agency and the system it administers. Prompt and accurate responses to their requests for information make a most favorable impression. Concise statements relating to pending legislation are well received provided they are factual and disinterested in character. Intemperate tirades and partisan blasts against members of the legislature are fatal. Controversial issues should

be avoided wherever possible. If the agency is compelled to take sides on a controversial or partisan issue, it is better technique to have the agency's statement "requested" by some legislator than it is to volunteer it. An even better technique is to have some outside civic agency take up the cudgels for the agency.

No useful purpose is served by railing against opponents of the merit system in the legislature. If their attacks are baseless, it is best to ignore them. The motives of consistent opponents of the agency become transparent enough and the public is rarely fooled by them. Sincere criticism of the agency deserves a frank and dignified answer. A dispassionate statement of the facts is generally the most disarming and effective answer the personnel agency can make. It may be well to have a member of the staff call on the legislative critic with explanatory material or data bearing on the point criticized and thus seek to gain his understanding and support.

It is not possible or necessary here to discuss all the methods and practices best adapted to develop a proper relationship between the personnel agency and the legislature. There are many possibilities, and their use must be considered in the light of particular circumstances and the type of legislator involved. But this is a certainty: The good will of the legislative branch of the government is as vital to the personnel agency and the merit system itself as any phase of the personnel agency's activities. Without it the system becomes a matter of form and routine, and eventually loses all substance.

#### RELATIONS WITH THE EXECUTIVE

The complex of relationships between the civil service commission and its chief executive may be divided into three, or possibly four, parts: first, the gaining of positive support; second, resistance to possible pressure transmitted through the executive to the civil service agency; and third, questions of general administration, such as approval of rules and furnishing of adequate funds. There is also a possible fourth feature—the matter of general public relations as they affect the personnel agency and its reliance on executive support.

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The positive support of the chief executive is essential to the effectiveness of a forward-looking personnel program. This is particularly true because of the backwardness of the personnel policies of many jurisdictions. Here, the typical situation may be characterized somewhat as follows:

1. The civil service commission is merely an employment agency that is viewed askance by both staff and line administrators, who consider it to be largely "outside the works."
2. The commission is financially so undernourished that it cannot do its job well.
3. Many personnel functions are already performed by administrative and supervisory officials, each operating according to his own lights and each resentful of any interference with his vested rights.
4. Many accepted personnel functions are partially or entirely ignored.

In the light of these facts, it is hardly necessary to argue that the adoption of an up-to-date policy and uniform program will require the fullest and most positive cooperation of the chief executive. When the personnel officer enters the sanctum of any staff or line administrator, the latter must perceive the shadow of their common chief in the background. Without such backing progress will be slow and the obstacles to be overcome almost insurmountable.

### *Advantages to the Chief Executive*

The merit system and all that it entails has many real advantages from the standpoint of the executive. In the first place it reduces tremendously the pressure upon him for political appointments, releasing his time and energy for more important matters of administration. In the second place, it enables him to improve the quality of management up and down the line. This will work out to his own advantage, to that of his party, and to the public generally. The results of a good personnel program are, briefly, a more competent, a more satisfied, and a more productive working force. Such results are essential to good management, and good management is a potent argument

for persuading the voters to continue either a man or a party in office.

Usually the personnel administrator will have considerable opportunity to aid the chief executive in resisting pressure brought upon him, whether through his political supporters or the administrative heads of departments. Both groups have their different objectives, and the chief executive will often find it difficult to maintain simultaneously harmonious relations with both his political supporters and his official family. The chief who has been convinced of the desirability of a sound personnel program will expect those responsible for it to resist unwarranted pressure, and he will support that resistance by argument and the prestige of his office. At times a certain amount of firmness on the part of the personnel agency is advisable. When this is found to be necessary, the chief executive should be fully and appropriately informed regarding the point of view of the agency, so that he may be able to advocate it with knowledge and conviction in his dealings with the pressure group or the officials who are seeking a decision favorable to their interests.

Another administrative problem centers around the making of the budget. It may be assumed that relatively few public personnel agencies have appropriations adequate to carry on their legally prescribed functions, to say nothing of those additional functions which may be assigned them under executive direction, as a proper part of personnel management. Without positive, if not aggressive, support from the chief executive, the well-established practice of limiting the personnel agency to a bare subsistence standard of living will continue. After the executive is convinced of the importance of personnel management, his support must then be won for providing adequate funds to meet the expense of carrying out a broad program. No one but the executive himself will be able to overcome the opposition of the appropriating body and the budget bureau, to say nothing of line executives, to the establishment of the personnel division as a staff agency and the expenditure of money to make it work.

*Relation to General Administration*

Let us turn, finally, to the question of general public relations as they may affect the personnel agency. The chief executive is operating in a democracy. He must depend not only upon his ability to do a good job but upon his ability to present his work to the public in a favorable light. In general the public undoubtedly favors the merit system. But if the number of positions coming within this system is to be drastically increased, as it has been in New York City, for example, the public must be acquainted with the need and the basis for such an extension. The wise political leader takes proper measures to insure the public acceptance of innovations of whatever sort. Even with the genuine support of the chief executive, the well-advised director of personnel will prepare the way for further steps in his program of advancement by carefully prepared publicity and educational programs. With such preparation the chief executive may safely give his official approval to proposed advances and the agency itself will avoid much criticism from both external and internal sources. Either an agency or an administration that forges far ahead of the understanding and acceptance of the public is courting trouble.

Summing up this section on relations with the chief executive as a "public," the points that have been emphasized are as follows:

1. Steps must be taken to secure positive support from the chief executive if a progressive personnel policy is to be installed.
2. The agency should respect the wishes of the executive but must on occasion resist those wishes, even at the cost of temporary displeasure, when they do not accord with permanent civil service standards.
3. The agency will have difficulty in obtaining adequate financial support without the positive sponsorship of the executive.
4. The agency must take some responsibility for maintaining the good will of the community toward itself and the administration as a whole as represented by its executive.



#### RELATIONS WITH DEPARTMENTAL AND OPERATING OFFICIALS

Operating officials constitute one of the most important and certainly one of the most critical "publics" with which the personnel agency must deal. Unlike most other contacts, which may be spasmodic, indefinite, and intangible, relations with operating officials are continuous, definite, and filled with potentialities for good or evil in the day-to-day functioning of personnel administration. The functions of the personnel agency and operating officials are complementary. Each is dependent on the other, regardless of whether or not this interdependence is consciously recognized and acted upon. The relationships are those occurring wherever technical staff and operating line contacts exist. The technical staff looks to the line officials for compliance with rules, regulations, and central policies. Such a staff is often tempted to wield greater and greater powers of control. The operating officials look to the technical staff for protection, service, and facilitation, often with an equal temptation to resist or resent central controls and to insist upon greater freedom of action. While the first may suspect the second of obstructing coordination and control by abusing the freedom left them, the second may suspect the first of hamstringing essential operations by interference, delay, and misguided control. These critical attitudes are not infrequently the result of misunderstanding and an inability or a lack of opportunity to see the other fellow's point of view. Both operating officials and central staffs have their particular and peculiar sets of attitudes or mores, all developed with equal logic to meet needs and situations which are crystal clear to the interested group but much less lucid to the group further removed. With conscious effort to recognize clearly and analyze these unintentionally opposing mores, the central agency could unquestionably do much to better its relations with operating officials.

#### *Effect on Personnel Program*

That such relations vitally affect the success of the personnel program is almost axiomatic. To illustrate, the selection process

may suffer greatly in prestige and effective operation if the personnel agency fails to consult operating officials in the preparation of examinations, if it permits registers to become antiquated or depleted, or if it neglects to allay misapprehensions and to explain or adjust unnecessary misunderstandings. The type of disciplinary action clearly intended in some civil service rules may be neglected, or punishable offenses may be deliberately condoned, with disastrous effects on morale, simply because the operating officials distrust the appeals machinery provided by the personnel agency.

If relations are extremely bad in general or in particular phases of the personnel program, operating officials may be inclined to short-circuit the personnel agency by going directly to the legislature for relief or remedy, thus unfortunately breaking down the desired separation of politics and routine administration. The same result may follow the neglect by the personnel agency to avail itself of its opportunities and full authority. If, for example, the agency fails to use its legal authority to classify positions in the service according to duties and responsibilities as the basis for the development of an equitable pay plan, the operating officials may resort to the less scientific and more inflexible salary schedules which the city council, county board, or state legislature can provide by ordinance, resolution, or statute.

In the event that relations between the personnel agency and operating officials are unsatisfactory, the effectuation of all personnel policy is made extremely difficult. Compliance is likely to be grudging and in conformity with the letter rather than the spirit of the policy. This unfortunate situation may be the result of personality clashes, undemocratic methods of policy determination, unsatisfactory service relationships, or a score of less tangible factors. If, on the other hand, such relations are good, compliance with personnel policy is likely to be voluntary and spontaneous. In such cases, the whole tone and tempo of personnel work may be set by the central agency, not only by formally announced rules and policy, but also by precept and example.

### *Contact Points*

Among the contact points between the personnel agency and line officials are personal interviews and conferences, including those which result from inquiries, investigations, hearings, and professional meetings; correspondence and telephonic relations; administrative reporting; advisory relations, where operating officials or departmental personnel officers are organized for such purposes; and service and control contacts involving the major employment processes. Included in the last category are relationships such as those connected with classification, pay, recruitment, certification, appointment, probation, training, service ratings, promotion and transfer, discipline, dismissals, and retirement.

### *Present Practices*

So far as can be learned, personnel agencies have generally devoted little planned effort toward improving relations along these lines. There are some notable exceptions. Some jurisdictions carefully select representatives who personally contact the operating agencies. In selecting these representatives, emphasis is placed on their tact and the ability to make good impressions. One personnel agency selects girls for its information desk on the basis of tact, appearance, and general acquaintance with departmental officials. Another arranges personal visits or tours to keep its staff informed about conditions in the operating departments. A third agency follows the helpful practice of focusing contacts upon one or two persons in each operating department, whenever possible. Such a procedure makes for more stable relationships and expedites the process of cultivating good will. In some cases persons who handle correspondence or telephone contacts with the operating officials are carefully trained in the proper form and techniques of good public relations.

In some cases, the personnel administrator or civil service commissioners are virtual members of the chief executive's cabinet and regularly meet with the heads of the operating de-

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partments and other staff representatives. The personnel director of the Tennessee Valley Authority enjoys such prestige in relation to other staff officials and departmental heads. He has his recognized place and voice at the meetings of those in charge of operations. This is in line with the practice followed in some of the most progressive private corporations in which the personnel function is assigned to an official with the rank of vice president. If personnel is accepted as a primary function of management, such a status is not only warranted but practically mandatory.

In the federal service, the reorganized Council of Personnel Administration, consisting primarily of departmental directors of personnel, is authorized by the Executive Order of June 24, 1938,

... to advise and assist the President and the Commission in the protection and improvement of the merit system . . . recommend from time to time to the President or the Commission needed changes in procedure, rules, or regulations . . . hold hearings and conduct investigations with respect to alleged abuses and proposed changes . . . carry on programs of study to coordinate and perfect the executive personnel service in all its branches, and . . . report upon the progress of personnel administration throughout the service.

The potentialities for improved personnel administration through better staff-line relations of this type are obvious. The Council, which meets weekly, has made an auspicious beginning. It has named committees to investigate several major personnel problems and has already given important aid and advice to the Civil Service Commission in formulating policies on training and competitive promotions. The more favorable reception given to policies which are jointly formulated is bound to prove a distinct advantage in their later enforcement.

### *Possible Attitudes, Devices, and Results*

The proper attitude to be assumed by the personnel agency in its relationships with operating officials depends on the jurisdiction of the agency involved and legal requirements or limitations. In a small governmental unit, it may well be that the

central agency should wield extensive powers of control over most of the employment processes, even performing the operations themselves in many cases. In such instances, personnel work as a differentiated function can scarcely be said to exist apart from the central agency.

Some of the numerous devices which may be used to improve relations between personnel staff and line executives may be enumerated and discussed briefly.

*Advisory personnel body.* A very effective device for stepping up cooperation is the organization of the operating officials into an advisory personnel body. Such a group serves as a means of inspiring confidence and gives operating officials an opportunity to participate in the formulation of policies which they must eventually execute. Compliance with rules, or at least a conscientious effort at compliance, is assured. A maximum amount of experience, intelligence, and ingenuity is drawn upon. The danger of the committee's usurpation of the proper functions of the personnel agency can be avoided by skillful leadership and adherence to the advisory relationship. As a result, line officers are less likely to carry their wishes or complaints to the legislative body. This device may also be found useful in smaller jurisdictions.

*Liaison, tours, inquiries.* In smaller jurisdictions, the operating officials may be contacted, their ideas and attitudes learned, and their needs discovered through special liaison representatives, or by means of periodic visits, inspection tours, and special inquiries by staff members of the personnel agency.

*Conferences, luncheons, informal discussion.* When new policies are announced or old ones fundamentally altered, it may prove advisable for the central agency to call in the operating officials or their representatives for the purpose of explaining and discussing the future program. However, the channel of communication should not be a one-way street. Probably the key to this whole problem is the establishment of effective two-way channels of communication, carrying ideas and suggestions up from the line of operation and carrying policy and instructions down from the central agency. Luncheons and informal meet-

ings can be of assistance in this relationship. At least one federal departmental personnel office has found it highly advantageous to have its representatives meet bureau operating officials and bureau personnel officers at weekly or bi-weekly luncheons, following which a major personnel problem is discussed frankly under the leadership of a specialist in that particular field. A similar device brings the heads of the principal divisions of the central personnel agency into personal conference with each major operating official or with his personnel representative or both. Two important objectives are thus gained. The central agency learns the needs, attitudes, and desires of the operating officials, and, at the same time, has opportunity to explain, stimulate, arouse interest, and gain cooperation on such new plans as the central agency may have.

In one jurisdiction, a training seminar in personnel administration was organized for the purpose of having both staff members of the central personnel agency and operating officials participate. This and the suggestions made above look in part toward making all supervisory officers personnel officers, interpreters at the point of contact of the accepted policies of the personnel agency. It is obvious that the most enlightened program for dealing with personnel at the top of the official pyramid may be sabotaged if the line officers who come into direct contact with the rank and file, and are therefore the real interpreters of the policy, are lacking in understanding or sympathy. For this reason every known device should be systematically utilized to create a partnership between the personnel staff and line executives and supervisors.

*Professional association.* The association of officials of the central and operating agencies in professional organizations or professional meetings produces tangible as well as intangible results. A considerable amount of research and experimentation is being conducted in the field of personnel administration, and the findings are worthy of the consideration of specialists in this field. Periodic discussion meetings are dictated both in the interest of disseminating knowledge and of considering ways and means of adapting this knowledge to local operating conditions.

The meetings and work of the Civil Service Assembly, the organization of the Society for Personnel Administration in Washington, D. C., and the establishment of other local personnel associations illustrate the possibilities of cooperation in this direction.

It should be emphasized, however, that the trend toward professionalization, while laudable for purposes of raising personnel standards, may have unfortunate consequences. Personnel administration should not be made a mystery, the secrets of which are revealed only to those who are bound by the ritual. If professionalization is carried to the point where intellectual barriers are erected against new or different points of view, particularly those raised by operating officials, a chasm may conceivably open up and widen between the personnel administrators, who are dealing with *one means* of administration, and line officials, who are dealing with the *ends* of government.

*Training.* Conferences, correspondence, and telephonic contacts with operating officials, as with the general public, may be improved by training the personnel of the central agency in the techniques of these modes of communication.

*Administrative reporting.* Improved relations may result from systematic administrative reporting. While willing to collect and report essential personnel data, operating officials do not want to be burdened with onerous reporting tasks not regularly required and hence not available from current records of operation. On the other hand, they are eager to receive reports giving an over-all view of personnel activities, problems, and statistics. Through skillfully prepared reports of this sort—reports of high informative value—the central agency increases its influence and improves cooperative relations with department heads and personnel workers within the departments.

*Clarity of rules, regulations, and policy.* It is incumbent upon the personnel agency to avoid the danger of setting up rules as ends in themselves or as official ritual, which operating officials can look upon—as they do without much provocation—as more formidable and time consuming than the circumstances require. In interpreting rules and regulations, care should be taken not

to arouse resentment by impugning, or appearing to impugn, the motives of operating officials. There are notable exceptions, of course, but often the operating official is just as devoted to good personnel administration as the most ardent personnel officer. On questions of policy, constant education is needed to keep operating officials fully informed as to the exact frame of reference within which they are expected to operate. Confused understanding inevitably means confused administration.

*Exchange of personnel.* Another device which can greatly facilitate better understanding and better working relationships is the exchange of personnel between operating and staff agencies. The extent to which this can be done depends on many factors beyond the scope of this discussion. From one point of view it would not be necessary to exchange personnel in more than a few key positions. In any case, neither the personnel agency nor operating officials should take the shortsighted view which places the immediate gain of uninterrupted operation above the permanent, long-run gain of mutual understanding.

*Efficient service.* Perhaps the surest way of establishing and maintaining good relations with operating officials is through efficient, courteous, and expeditious service. In many of the smaller jurisdictions operating officials look to the civil service agency for protection from numerous types of internal and external pressure. Service functions are considered secondary. The situation is reversed in many larger jurisdictions. Actually, of course, service and protection are often merely two phases of the same process. Willingness to use such personnel machinery as the central agency provides varies in proportion to the effectiveness, expeditiousness, and fairness of its operation. Relations are affected by the degree of consultation and suggestion permitted in the formulating of examinations and the methods of recruitment, by the age and quality of eligibility registers, by the extent to which on-the-spot needs and judgments are respected in promotion and training programs, by the adequacy yet simplicity of rules and regulations, by the fairness and objectivity of hearings, by the sincerity of the employee relations program, and by innumerable other factors usually left to work them-



selves out by chance. Needless to say, good service cannot be given without ample funds and adequate staff. These may be both cause and effect of good public relations, as friendly operating officials may be of considerable assistance in acquiring and maintaining both of these prerequisites to good service and good relations.

There is urgent need that personnel agencies recognize the operating officials as one of the most important of the many "publics" to be considered in an effective public relations program. What the men who appoint and supervise think about the personnel agency really matters. It vitally affects the successful unfolding of the entire program. What they do about personnel functions is dependent on what they think about the personnel agency. Planned effort and conscious direction are needed to minimize unfavorable impressions and to maximize pleasant, productive relations—replacing the passive method of relying on day-to-day contacts with operating officials to produce good relations as an inevitable by-product. True, the inevitability is certain enough without the exertion of effort, but the quality is another matter, quite susceptible of conscious improvement. The results of such planned effort would not be confined to mere good fellowship; instead, they would find vigorous expression in every phase of the personnel program.

#### RELATIONS WITH EMPLOYEES IN THE SERVICE

The relations of a public personnel agency with the employees of its jurisdiction involve the same problems as are met in its relations with the general body of citizens. However, it is particularly important that the agency gain and maintain the good will of public employees because their confidence in its work is usually soon reflected in the attitudes of their friends and associates, and ultimately in those of the general public. It will little profit a civil service commission to cultivate painstakingly the good will of the "outsider" if it neglects its relationships with the "insider." Moreover, since the civil servant has a personal interest in government generally, and in the public personnel agency in particular, which far transcends that of

other citizens, he is usually not only a better informed but also a more severe critic of the agency's operations.

The extent of contact between the personnel agency and the employee in the service is, of course, governed largely by the civil service law under which the agency operates. Sometimes the agency is limited in its work to little more than recruiting and examining. Sometimes it is made responsible for the establishment of salary schedules, regulations of leaves and hours and conditions of work, training, and investigation of removal charges. Some agencies, even with broad authority, have confined themselves to the mere holding of entrance examinations. Others have voluntarily undertaken such activities as the promotion of credit unions and recreational programs.

Where the civil service commission is a mere examining body, its relations with employees are generally at a minimum. Such a relationship is usually satisfactory enough, since the successful candidate seldom feels anything but approval for the examination or the agency which conducted it. It is only the more energetic, enlightened, or conscientious civil service commission which extends its interest in the employee beyond the appointment stage and seeks to cultivate the good will of the civil servant.

The establishment and the maintenance of confidence in the impartiality and disinterestedness of the personnel agency must be the cornerstone of its employee relations. Once the agency is suspected of favoritism for any political party, faction, labor union, group, race, or religion, it will find itself severely handicapped in its relations with all other groups and individuals in the service. An agency which "takes sides" in a political campaign, an inter-union dispute, or a departmental squabble, will find its every subsequent action judged in the light of its known or supposed partisanship.

#### *Neutrality Essential to Employee Confidence*

A number of civil service commissions are helped to avoid the political pitfall by the fact that the civil service law forbids the participation of their members in the affairs of any political

organization. From the standpoint of employee relations, if from no other, it might be well for other civil service commissioners voluntarily to deny themselves such activities. Certainly the spectacle of the members of a civil service commission or its top administrative employees occupying important places in the councils of a political party is not calculated to assure public employees that promotions, lay-offs, or changes of status will be made without regard to political considerations. There is little wonder that in states and cities where civil service commissioners are known partisans, an employee runs to his political leader as a matter of course if he wants a promotion or a better assignment; or that he hastens to comply with demands for campaign contributions or doorbell ringing services before election, even if such demands are made in violation of the civil service law.

Organizational partisanship, although far less common, can be as deleterious as political partisanship. In certain cities where it has become known that a particular employee organization has an "inside track" with the civil service commission, the favored organization does not hesitate to capitalize upon that fact in recruiting members. Other organizations find themselves hopelessly handicapped in keeping their members, much less in gaining new ones. Employees not affiliated with the preferred union find in their nonaffiliation a reason for every discrimination—real or fancied—against themselves. Every suspension or removal sustained or dismissed, every advance in grade or salary, and every transfer is scrutinized for evidence that membership or nonmembership in a particular organization is the motivating factor. The fact that such a charge of favoritism may be proved false will not run down the rumor if there is any ground whatever for suspicion again to take root. Only through unswerving impartiality can the confidence of employees be gained.

A civil service commission, by its very constitution, is perennially subject to the charge that it favors "the bosses." For this reason, demands are constantly made for employee representation on commissions and on any appeals board which hears disciplinary charges against employees. Employees fear that in a dispute the civil service commission will side with the super-

visor rather than with the subordinate and feel that for this reason the dice are always loaded against them.

A civil service administrator who is seldom available to rank and file employees, who betrays impatience with their inquiries and is inattentive to their valid complaints, and who perhaps permits his staff to follow his bad example, furnishes fuel for such suspicion. He has only himself to blame if his agency becomes unpopular. Many a civic organization which has furnished a public employee advice or information has heard him apologize: "I wrote the civil service commission for advice a long time ago and never got an answer"; or, "I went to see the commission about this, but everybody in authority was too busy to see me."

It is not here suggested that a busy executive should be called upon constantly to answer simple questions or should hold himself in readiness to listen to the grievances of every disgruntled worker. Even the smallest and busiest of personnel agencies, however, should be able to detail at least one attentive, intelligent, and tactful clerk for "information" service.

Much distrust of the personnel agency, among employees as well as among the general public, springs from ignorance of its objectives and a hazy notion of its authority and function. Candidates for promotion as well as for original appointment are apt to blame the agency when a desired transfer is denied, when salary increments are withheld, when a lower salary is offered than that mentioned in the examination announcement, when reductions of force become necessary and "the civil service commission doesn't do anything to save our jobs," or when appointment to a supervisory position is made from outside the service rather than through promotion.

### *Devices for Strengthening Relations with Employees*

Much misunderstanding, disappointment, and distrust could be avoided by publicizing the roles played in these transactions by the personnel agency, the budget bureau, and the operating departments, and by making known the reasons why a proposed course could not be followed. One of the largest municipal civil

service commissions has begun the publication of a monthly bulletin to apprise employees of court decisions and administrative and executive determinations affecting the city service, as well as of examinations and certifications. Several state and city agencies have issued manuals which are distributed to all employees, explaining civil service rules and regulations in non-technical language, and answering the most frequent questions about employee rights and duties. Other agencies prepare regular or occasional press releases for the information both of employees and of the public.

In a few jurisdictions, welfare and safety programs initiated by the personnel agency have paid dividends in savings as well as in heightened morale. The establishment of a credit union; a library service where employees are encouraged to borrow books and periodicals on government, politics, and current events; the provision of training facilities; and other similar plans, have been undertaken by forward-looking agencies not afraid to tackle more than routine duties.

Progressive agencies, as a matter of course, welcome the views of employee spokesmen at hearings on changes in rules and classification. Suggestions made by employee groups have often proved to be sound and worth adopting. Some agencies set aside a definite time for weekly conferences with officers of employee organizations, or for "press conferences" with representatives of employee publications. In some jurisdictions with a full-time commission or executive head, it might be practicable to announce regular "office hours" during which individual employees might consult the civil service commissioners regarding their employment. Such a plan would not only save the commissioners from the accusation of aloofness, while at the same time protecting them against interruption at other hours, but would also give opportunity for personal contacts with subordinate employees—contacts which are usually absent except in small cities.

Merely because of poor publicity, the laudable undertakings of a personnel agency may suffer the hostility of the very persons for whose benefit they are intended. In one state, for example,

the word "reclassification" is to most employees as the proverbial red rag to a bull—because of an unfortunate experience twenty years ago.

Particularly are the old-timers and those innately conservative apt to resent innovations in methods and procedure, no matter how logical or desirable. Such employees are quick to "stand on their rights," and to defend cherished privileges if they believe they may be withdrawn or extended to other groups. In one city an attempt to end blind-alley jobs by permitting employees in several departments to compete for promotions, instead of confining eligibility to workers in the department in which the vacancies occurred, was met by vigorous opposition. This might have been avoided had the advantages of the change been adequately explained. Similar reactions have been precipitated by the introduction of aptitude and general knowledge tests, higher educational standards, and credits for completion of certain training courses. Here the same problem is involved as in educating the general public concerning the personnel program, but it is in some ways more difficult because the person already in the service is naturally inclined to look for threats to his security or advancement, and to condemn the whole scheme if he believes any part of it holds such a threat to himself or his group.

It goes without saying that a "good press" is invaluable to the personnel agency in its contacts with employees as well as with all other publics. A hostile employee magazine may be a constant thorn in the side of the personnel agency. Promptness, accuracy, and courtesy in furnishing information, an unswerving devotion to the truth, and a cooperative spirit are as valuable in achieving friendly relations with the editor of a civil service paper as with the editor of any other publication. Moreover, the presentation of the actual facts in the news columns may overcome the effects of an editorial making a personal attack on the motives of the commissioners.

A sound program of public relations with public employees must be based on an understanding of employee psychology, the methods and practices of employee organizations, their needs

and desires, and their ambitions and faults, coupled with a constant appreciation of the fact that the public service is maintained for the general public welfare and not for the employees alone.

#### RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS AND GUIDANCE AGENCIES

As employment difficulties increase, schooling assumes a greater vocational aspect. Before the depression, when the influence of commerce and industry held sway in many of our public institutions of learning, the trend of education was almost exclusively toward the realm of private enterprise. Present-day textbooks, curricula, and guidance counsel still reflect the overwhelming influence of private as opposed to public interest in the orientation of our educational program.

In addition to this, party politics in America have been traditionally in the hands of unschooled men. Headquarters for the party boss were more apt to be in a room over a saloon than in the auditorium of the high school. College professors and "practical politicians" eyed one another askance, for academic concepts of political ethics and civic responsibility were distinctly out of step with the program of the ward heeler. A wide chasm developed between school-taught ideals of American democracy and the practical business of carrying on local government through party machines and party patronage. Prior to the last generation, the great majority of voters lacked schooling beyond the elementary grades. It was felt that to be "a man of the people" the candidate chosen for public office must be similarly handicapped. Men who obtained public office were looked upon as the successful men of their day, and small regard was paid to their antecedents. The not inconsiderable number who owed their place in politics partly to formal education did not advertise that fact. With legislative and top administrative posts in national, state, and local government filled largely with "self-made" men, it was to be expected that appointees to rank and file administrative positions should be almost equally deficient in formal schooling. It was hard to link financial losses and excessive costs with the inefficiency of an individual government

clerk. The profit motive was not aroused and there was as yet no realization of the desperate need for men and women of the best possible training and for those animated with devotion to the public interest.

It is not surprising that under such conditions the prestige of government service was not high. Among the better educated members of the community, particularly among schoolmen, it was almost nonexistent. The promising high school and college student was often led to believe that government service offered no future, no lasting career, no suitable monetary reward. While many of these features have been drastically changed during the last twenty years, the social lag in many of our educational institutions permits conditions of the recent past to determine the nature of the instruction and guidance which are still given. In spite of declining opportunities in private enterprise and increasing prospects for satisfactory careers in public service, the so-called "commercial" courses in our secondary schools are still the most popular.

It is primarily the lack of opportunity in private industry rather than good public relations work on the part of personnel agencies which is causing schoolmen to become conscious of vocational opportunities in the public service. The plight of high school and college graduates with no place to go has led to a rapid increase in guidance facilities in institutions of learning. In desperation many of these vocational counselors have turned to government to ascertain if, after all, a respectable career for some of their students may be available there. A few institutions have definitely seen the light and have set up schools of government and of citizenship and public affairs. They are proving not only that we should urge the best to serve the state for the sake of society, but that satisfying careers are now available for those who prepare themselves for the public service.

### *Points of Attack*

What can the typical public personnel agency do to encourage this movement? What can it do to bring about proper relations with educational institutions, public and private? With school



counselors looking in all directions for promising openings, there is a golden opportunity to do something about reorienting education in such a way that the public as well as the private interest will be served.

Both vocational counselors and teachers should be utilized as unofficial assistants in the recruiting policies of public personnel agencies. Their acquaintance with individual students qualifies them in a high degree for sifting potential candidates and advising the personnel official. They are also in an excellent position to interpret the public service and stimulate promising young people to consider its opportunities. If they are to accomplish these things they will have to be well informed and be kept up to date. Personal contacts, specially designed bulletins, annual and other reports, examination announcements, and various exhibits on the work of government are means by which to develop the teamwork here envisaged. It will pay public officials to cultivate school officials, for these officials supervise the employment market from which young people are to be drawn. Though some of the secondary school graduates may not be able to enter the service immediately upon completing their schooling because of age limitations, their former teachers may still be the best source of reliable reference when they are later under consideration or when suitable candidates are being sought. In these processes members of the school staff may be enlisted as unofficial aids.

In Cincinnati staff members of the municipal civil service commission talk individually to high school graduates and appear often on school assembly programs. This work is carried on as part of a counseling and guidance service conducted under the auspices of the local Y.M.C.A. Much may be said in favor of this type of public relations, but surely something more fundamental needs to be done with respect to our educational institutions.<sup>1</sup> Committees should be at work studying textbooks and other printed material used in schools and colleges in an en-

<sup>1</sup>The necessity for providing a closer relationship between the educational system and the needs of the public service is discussed in considerable detail in the report of the Committee on Positive Recruitment, a companion volume in this series.

deavor to make possible an accurate presentation of government and its problems in terms of twentieth-century America. Not every accounting setup needs a profit and loss statement. Business letters are not the only type of nonpersonal correspondence. The day-to-day work of the great administrative forces of government is quite as worthy of consideration as the stereotyped textbook discussion of executive, legislative, and judicial functions. What student knows anything about government in its proprietary capacity? How many educators are conscious of the rapid growth of the merit system and of the tremendous difference between opportunities for a career under it and under a patronage system?

### *Relations with Colleges and Universities*

If we turn specifically to the universities and colleges the outlook becomes somewhat more hopeful. As early as 1916 the Wisconsin state government and the University of Wisconsin worked out a cooperative plan for the employment and training of working fellows. The present chief actuary of a state insurance department, a noted professor of political science at a western college, and the head of a state league of municipalities are among the working fellows who were trained in that initial effort at cooperative learning for public service. Three years ago, with the active interest of President Clarence Dykstra, the working fellow arrangement at the University of Wisconsin was revived.<sup>2</sup>

The Personnel Commission for the Los Angeles Schools maintains similar cooperative arrangements with local colleges and universities in and about Los Angeles. For more than three years, three members of a relatively small staff have worked half time for the Commission and, at the same time, have carried on graduate work in public administration and allied fields at local universities. Reports on research studies in public personnel are prepared in such a way as to make them acceptable for graduate credit in two of the local colleges.

<sup>2</sup>Horace S. Fries and Ernest Engelbert, *The Wisconsin State Government In-service Training Apprenticeship Program, Its First Year* (University of Wisconsin, 1939).

For several years, under the leadership of Dr. Frederick M. Davenport, President of the National Institute of Public Affairs, colleges and universities throughout the country have cooperated in furnishing young men and women with high scholastic and personal attainments for internships in public administration in the various agencies of the federal government. Leading civil service agencies throughout the country now recruit junior technicians with the active interest and collaboration of faculties in political science and public administration.

The cited instances of proper relationships between our schools and our government constitute at best only very modest beginnings. The needs for far greater cooperation become apparent as ever greater responsibilities are turned over to public agencies. In an attempt to carry its share of these burdens properly, the United States Civil Service Commission was forced to expand its staff more than 100 per cent in a period of six months during 1940. Among new staff members are examiners assigned to cover one or more major professional areas. They are not only responsible for all internal problems relating to particular professions, but also for informing colleges and universities about opportunities in public service in their respective fields. Colleges and universities in several of the western states are kept in touch with public service needs through cooperative arrangements with Western Personnel Service, a nonprofit guidance agency, with headquarters in Pasadena, California.

Educators are not the only persons who need enlightenment as to the needs and opportunities for well trained persons in public service. While the public reaction to the term "brain truster" was not as violent as many politicians had hoped it might be, it was nevertheless of a kind to give real concern to persons interested in the democratic process. Patronage and seniority have been principal ingredients in the rise of many of those who today hold important positions in government. This is not to disparage the many splendid public officials who have come up "the hard way" and who are today leaders in the movement to attract the best products of our schools into public service. It is merely to call attention to the inertia which still

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constitutes a real problem in attracting and holding a competent public personnel.

A little investigation of the public relations possibilities between school and the public personnel agency will show a broad range of opportunities for cooperation. Few groups are in a better position to implant ideas concerning sound public service standards than are teachers and guidance officers in educational institutions. Nor should the executives of public school systems be overlooked in this connection. When proper public relations succeed in diverting into government service its fair proportion of the best products of the schools, there will be no dearth of the abilities and skills so necessary to operate the complicated machinery of modern government. Let it be noted that unless this machinery is satisfactorily operated, the permanence of any government is far from secure.

#### RELATIONS WITH SPECIAL INTEREST AND PRESSURE GROUPS

Of the various types of public relations which the personnel agency must develop, few are more important or more continuous than the relations with special interest and pressure groups. The personnel agency meets these groups at almost every turn, for it deals with the basic and key materials of the governing process—the personnel which determines not only the effectiveness and direction of government, but to a marked extent its very character as well.

#### *Political Parties*

Political parties are the most powerful and the most ubiquitous of pressure groups. The major interest of parties, particularly in the United States, has been traditionally in the patronage of public employment. Personnel agencies have been established to thwart this use of public employment as a reward for party loyalty. It is most natural, then, that the party sometimes looks upon the personnel agency as a hostile branch of the government which it must at all costs eliminate or at least manipulate to serve its own interests. If the personnel agency

cannot be abolished, the party organization will engage persistently in a campaign to make the agency serve its purposes.

Points of contact between the public personnel agency and the party organization are manifold and at each point the party organization usually has a dual objective—to preserve the patronage system and to immobilize the personnel agency. The first clash comes in drawing up the statute from which the personnel agency derives its authority. A standard strategy of the party organization at this juncture is to limit the authority of the personnel agency, particularly to maximize the unclassified service and exempt positions, since it is with the competitive class that the party organization runs into difficulties. The scope of the positions included in the competitive class is determined primarily by the legislative body. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that good public relations be maintained between the personnel agency and the legislature and the chief executive, and no less with the more general public whose attitudes influence so greatly the legislative process.

The second major point of contact between the party organization and the personnel agency is in the appointment of the head or heads of the agency. It is at this point that the party organization may succeed at a single stroke in its strategy of neutralizing the agency. The determining factor here is ordinarily the chief executive, and this fact alone serves to emphasize the key importance of effective public relations with his office.

The third point of contact is in the making of budgetary provisions for personnel administration. The consistent strategy of the party organization here is one of planned malnutrition which will weaken the personnel agency in its efforts to extend the merit system and operate it successfully. In New York City, for example, one of Tammany Hall's most effective techniques in hamstringing the merit system has been to provide starvation budgets which limit and perhaps even demoralize the staff of the personnel agency. Here, the area of conflict is broadened to include the legislature, the chief executive, and the budget bureau. Again the personnel agency has cause to cultivate its relations with these officials.

These three points of contact represent the impact of the party organization upon the personnel agency through intermediate branches of the government. Other major contacts are direct in their nature. In these the party organization attempts to influence the actions of the personnel agency itself.

The party machine or organization is interested in the administration of the merit system itself. Here the party organization, even though beaten on all other fronts, remains tireless in its efforts to obtain requirements favorable to itself, to institutionalize low standards as representing the maximum advantage for party followers, and finally to plead in the examining process itself for "a break for a good guy." Here pressure is most frequently directed toward the heads of the agency and the leaders of the party organization. Not infrequently the technique is varied by using intermediaries attached to the party organization but appearing in various other roles. In defending itself against such pressure, the personnel agency must rely as always upon favorable relations with other sources of support, notably the chief executive and allied civic organizations.

The party organization often attempts to set itself up as the main channel of information between the personnel agency and applicants for public employment. It is of basic importance to the party organization to be able at least to pose as the recognized channel through which public employment is secured. If the party can be the first "public" informed of vacancies, of prospective examinations and results of examinations, and of additional employment opportunities for existing eligible lists, then it can profit greatly from the widespread impression that it occupies a key position in the employment process. The personnel agency's defense against the injurious results of this process is to provide prompt and complete information to all concerned, thereby minimizing the opportunities of the party organization to pose as the main channel of information.

The party organization also has an interest in the important field of duties classification, since the reclassification of one incumbent as against another carries with it the potentialities of profit to the party organization if it can guide the reclassification

to benefit its favorites. Salary schedules represent a similar opportunity for the party organization to gain important advantages for its followers. It is no less active in its attempts to control the transfer procedure, for here too it may be able to smooth the way for a loyal party adherent by contacting directly the personnel agency and the operating department.

The basic hypothesis of the foregoing analysis is that the aims of the party organization and of the personnel agency are inherently contradictory. The personnel agency accordingly must pursue its aims by resisting those of the party organization and by developing other public relations contacts which will serve to minimize the power of the party machine. To a certain extent, the party is an intermediary between the personnel agency and the general public, and as such it has certain rights. Particularly does it have the right to information concerning public personnel policies and practices. The agency must deal as fairly with the party organization as with any other of its various publics, but it can hardly regard it as an ally except in those instances where conflict between the parties places one of them for the moment on the side of the personnel agency. The personnel agency's basic reliance must be upon its ability to appeal over the head of the party organization to the general public and to the responsible elected representatives of the party, particularly the legislators and the chief executive.

### *Civic Groups*

In addition to the political party as a pressure group, the various civic groups which are interested in successful public personnel administration rank relatively high in importance. These groups, for the purposes of the present discussion, fall into two classes—those which are natural allies of the personnel agency, within a limited framework at least, and those which are allies of the personnel agency with respect only to occasional objectives.

In the first category are such organizations as the National Civil Service Reform League, the National League of Women Voters, the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce, the

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city clubs, bureaus of research, and such special organizations as, for example, the Citizens Union in New York City. These organizations accept and support the main objectives of the merit system. In the typical community they have been largely responsible for the adoption of the merit system and for its continuance. The points of contact between the personnel agency and these groups tend to disappear, however, once the reform stage is past. It is thus essential that the public personnel agency assume responsibility for a carefully planned public relations program for these groups, with the objective of maintaining continuous interest and support. Under a well-balanced policy which will appeal to these groups, support may be secured against attacks on the basic personnel statute as well as for a suitable budget to execute the major administrative processes of the personnel agency.

A wide-awake personnel agency will maintain, first of all, cordial personal relations with the leaders of these several groups, and will keep them individually informed of the problems faced by the agency and of opportunities for their cooperation. A planned program will also furnish such groups with periodic reports on the progress made by the agency. It will carefully relate personnel agency objectives to the current interests and program of each group. Coordinated programs are feasible in almost all instances and should be looked upon as a continuing responsibility.

Beyond this, however, the far-seeing personnel director will endeavor to carry coordination and consolidation to its logical end by fostering the establishment of a "merit system council." A formal organization, having as its avowed principal purpose the support and furtherance of the merit system, will naturally draw upon these sympathetic civic and professional organizations for a large portion of its membership, and in doing so, it will serve to incorporate and give strong expression to what might otherwise be a diffused and intangible force. The recently formed Wisconsin Council on Civil Service is one example of such an organization. Its membership is drawn from such diverse sources as the State League of Women Voters, the Council of



Churches, the Conference of Social Work, and various veteran and public employee organizations. It is, nevertheless, an integrated organization, in that its members not only express their personal support of the merit system, but serve as an unifying force in bringing together the organizations of which they are members to give corporate support to the merit system.

The second category in the list of "pressure" publics includes such community groups as taxpayer organizations and their auxiliaries. Their interest in the personnel agency covers not only the salary schedules of public employees, but also their number. On the former item, the personnel agency has the task of selling its major objectives as a long-range approach to salary schedule problems. Coordinated programs are here more difficult because of the short-range emphasis of most of such groups. However, since such groups are becoming more and more influential, they may not wisely be ignored. Where necessary, they should be educated to an understanding of sound salary and personnel policies.

### *Special Interest Groups*

The personnel agency operating in a large jurisdiction will also be confronted with a variety of other special interest or pressure groups. The most important of these, from the standpoint of the agency, will be the various employee organizations. The relationships of public personnel agencies to employees in the public service are discussed elsewhere, but there are variations in such organizations which deserve analysis here. Occasionally the employees, eligibles on civil service lists, and auxiliary leaders of political parties form special civil service organizations, such as the Civil Service Forum in New York City. Such organizations usually have not merely employee objectives, but political and commercial objectives as well. It is doubtful whether, by any public relations technique, the objectives of such organizations can be made to harmonize with those of an effective personnel agency. Therefore, the agency must deal with them in much the same way as it deals with party organizations, minimizing the conflicts and emphasizing mutual ad-

vantages without abandoning or compromising basic objectives. The agency must also recognize the right of such organizations to information concerning policies and practices.

Another special "public" with which the personnel agency must deal in large jurisdictions is the civil service newspaper. The point of contact here, of course, is the news which deals with the agency's daily activities. Where the newspaper is sustained by general circulation, it is likely to be interested, as is the party organization, in the low standards which are favorable to mass circulation. Such a newspaper may, in the name of large circulation, oppose most of the technical advances of the public personnel agency. The best defense against such real or potential opposition is a public relations program which will insure thorough coverage of civil service news in the daily press, and effective use of the radio and other media of communication with the general public. The most effective technique, perhaps, is the publication of an agency bulletin of wide circulation, relieving the commission of any dependence upon the privately operated civil service newspaper.<sup>3</sup> The agency, thus made independent, may then develop a program of positive public relations with the private civil service newspaper and be assured of its usefulness in the accomplishment of major objectives.

Another special interest group with which the public personnel agency must frequently deal is the cram school which seeks to prepare candidates for the agency's examinations. Here too, the agency is dealing with an organization whose objectives can rarely be reconciled with its own. The best public relations policy in this respect is to emphasize the training available in recognized educational institutions, stimulate effective programs of in-service training, and develop the agency's examinations to a level which minimizes cram school preparation.

The above analysis indicates that the "pro" merit system groups and the "antis" present a series of challenging problems.

<sup>3</sup>Several agencies have used this device with a considerable amount of success. Examples of such publications include the monthly *Civil Service News* of the New York City Civil Service Commission, the monthly *Civil Servant* of the California State Personnel Board, and the intermittent *Civil Service Notes* of the Rhode Island State Department of Civil Service.

If such problems are to be satisfactorily solved, one will have recourse to a variety of methods. This sector of the personnel agency's publics should be carefully studied and systematically handled.

#### RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS

In analyzing the various publics with which a personnel agency is concerned, the one that would come to mind first is undoubtedly the public press. In fact, the term "public relations" is identified by many people as being equivalent to newspaper publicity. On the whole it may be said that the newspapers are neither particularly favorable nor unfavorable to public personnel programs. As a rule they maintain a neutral attitude, testing whatever comes their way from personnel agencies from the sole point of view of its newsworthiness.

The problem of officials in a personnel agency becomes, then, a question of determining what types of news items are likely to catch the discriminating eye of the editor. James L. McCamy has distinguished twelve types of "stories" which emanated from federal departments and were published in the newspapers.<sup>4</sup> In the order of emphasis received, these were: (1) news of the progress, policy, and procedure of the agency; (2) facts from records and research published for the aid of readers who might find the information useful; (3) news of agency personnel; (4) news in which the emphasis is placed on the work and techniques of the agency; (5) news of hearings before the agency; (6) news describing the efforts of officials to influence either public or private policy without reference to legislation already before Congress; (7) records of applications, agreements, answers, and complaints filed with the agency; (8) news describing the efforts of administrative officials to influence legislation already introduced; (9) feature stories only incidentally treating the work of the agency and apparently released for their value as information; (10) news of decisions or rulings; (11) records of contracts let and bids requested; and (12) news of statements or counteraccusations made in response to attacks on the agency.

<sup>4</sup>*Government Publicity*, University of Chicago Press (1939), p. 67.

The above is a rather comprehensive list of types of material likely to appeal to newspaper editors. It is reproduced because of its suggestive value.

### *A Practical Guide to Good Press Relations*

Devices for promoting good relations with the press include the interview, the press agent, the press conference, the press statement and release. These methods of handling publicity are discussed in a later chapter dealing with publicity media available to the personnel agency. The best over-all guide for one interested in maintaining satisfactory relations with the press and in providing representatives of the press with the sort of material which may serve their purposes has been set up by Hal Hazelrigg in the following thirteen suggestions which come out of practical experience and direct contacts with public agencies.<sup>5</sup>

1. If I were a city official, I would have a clearly defined and systematic policy in all press relations. I would either supervise execution of such policies myself or have a responsible person, preferably with a knowledge of news and reporting techniques, do so under my direction. I would not deny reporters access to department heads but I would consult with the latter from time to time on matters of policy in regard to their own press relations.

2. I would, after this policy is clearly understood, arrange conferences with the publishers and city editors of each of the local newspapers. I would ask their advice on how to clear the news for their convenience, and how to make that news accurately reflect the best values in public administration. I would discuss the result of these conferences with the reporter on my beat and get his reaction to them. He is my daily contact; I would never make him feel I was "going over his head."

3. I would arrange a convenient, regular "press conference" time to see all newspapermen, although I would never deny any one of them admittance at any time.

4. I would develop my own "nose for news." If I found it necessary to make off-the-record statements, I would be sure the reporter understood at the outset that I was talking off-the-record. I would be free and helpful to reporters in their news-gathering jobs and

<sup>5</sup>"A Newspaper Man Looks at City Hall," *Public Management*, March 1938, pp. 67-70.

answer all questions I thought fair and proper. If I could not answer a question I would, if possible, explain why. If a reporter were after a story which would be detrimental to good government if announced prematurely, I would tell him all the facts on that story, appealing to his sense of fair play in holding it. However, I would promise his paper an equal "news break" when that story was ready.

5. I would see that news breaks were distributed as evenly as possible between the morning and evening papers. If I talked to competitive reporters individually I would be careful to give each exactly the same story.

6. I would not exaggerate the occasional petty criticisms that newspapers print so long as my general press relations were good.

7. If a "news leak" occurred and the report, because of inadequate information, was misinterpreted, I would call in newsmen and explain the proper interpretations to them.

8. I would ask editors to give me a fair chance to answer critical "letters-to-the-editor" in the same column printing such letters.

9. I would insist that all municipal and departmental reports designed for public reading be written in terms understandable to the layman, with the qualities of clarity, simplicity, and directness, and with a format that would make people, including newspapermen, want to read them.

10. On major public reports I would make the matter available to reporters from time to time before the report itself is actually published, if that is possible. These releases would be carefully timed. I would point out to the reporter the significance of more complicated passages in these reports and interpret them so he could write accurate and intelligent stories. I would also point out to him the infinite possibilities in various departments for news features and special Sunday articles. I would help him to get pictures for such articles.

11. I would prepare releases or formal written statements only on those stories of important policy where misconceptions or misquotes might result. Newspapers generally prefer to do their own local stories in their own way, and if I have the right to contact with them I can explain any story clearly.

12. I would look upon newspaper people as intelligent men engaged in a reputable work, and I would instruct all department heads and employees to treat them with respect and courtesy.

13. Finally, I would make the newspaper an effective instrument in accounting to the public for my stewardship, and I would keep in mind the significant motto of a great newspaper chain: "Give light and the people will find their way."

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Other practical suggestions, as well as more detailed analyses of the types of material that may be made available to newspapers, will be found in a later chapter, "Nongovernmental Publications," which deals with the newspaper as one of the several media for keeping the public in touch with the policies and practices of the personnel agency. It may be looked upon as an elaboration of many of the suggestions just covered.

## *Chapter III*

### **Checking on Public Attitudes**

A BASIC step in planning a comprehensive public relations program is to determine the existing attitudes which characterize the publics with which the personnel agency deals. Such an analysis is a prerequisite to the development of an effective program. It will serve:

1. To provide a basis for differentiating the levels of understanding of the various groups to which the agency directs its attention, and for selecting the media best suited to each group or public.

2. To discover stereotypes and "blind spots" in the work of the agency.

3. To inform the agency concerning the exact character and location of sore spots in its contacts with the various publics. These may be due to lack of information about the agency's activities or to real flaws in the agency's operations, of which the officials may or may not be aware.

4. To keep officials posted on changes in the attitudes of the publics concerned, thus permitting them to anticipate the "unexpected" reactions, at the polls and elsewhere—reactions which so frequently disrupt the best laid official plans.

The value of this type of analysis seems obvious. It epitomizes what is meant by the "two-way street" in public relations. As previously stated, the basic test of success in a democratic government is the extent to which it serves the public as the public desires to be served. The "two-way street" enables the public official to keep informed as to what the public wants, or, if necessary, to educate it to want what the law prescribes. Private corporations often devote as much as 80 per cent of their initial public relations budgets to investigations of "consumer reac-

tions." Yet, so far as is known, no public personnel agency and very, very few public agencies of any sort have made serious efforts in this direction. The chief reason for this neglect has been the lack of simple and reliable techniques for measuring public attitudes and the failure to use techniques available.

#### TECHNIQUES FOR THE DETERMINATION OF ATTITUDES

Limits of space forbid a thorough analysis of the techniques of attitude measurement.<sup>1</sup> Let it suffice to give assurance that there are effective, relatively simple, and reliable means of finding and measuring the attitudes and stereotypes of individuals and groups toward persons, policies, and procedures.

The normal method of finding out what people think is to ask them, but there are several ways of doing the asking. The regular interview, which is most widely used, is quite often unsystematic, yielding statements that can be correlated only with difficulty, if at all. Next in order of use is the free-answer questionnaire, sometimes supplemented by an interview. A better device, but one of limited analytical value, is the guided response or multiple-choice questionnaire. More refined analysis is possible with the Likert instrument or scoring schedule<sup>2</sup>—a special form of multiple-choice questionnaire.

The most reliable and precise instrument that has been developed thus far for the measurement of attitudes is the psychophysical scale. Standard scales of this type have been worked out to measure favor or disfavor toward any social object. Individual scales must be built, however, if one wishes to measure the content of an attitude or other variables than favor-disfavor. Considerable time and experimentation will be consumed in such a task before a valid scale can be built. Possibly it may best be achieved through the cooperation of the central office of the Civil Service Assembly with technical experts in scale building, rather than through the efforts of any one agency.

<sup>1</sup>For a general discussion of these techniques see Herman C. Beyle, *Public Opinion and Government* (to be published).

<sup>2</sup>For a description of this method of attitude measurement, see R. Likert, "A Technique For the Measurement of Attitudes," *Archives of Psychology*, 1932, No. 140, pp. 5-55.



ILLUSTRATIVE ANALYSES OF CURRENT ATTITUDES

*White Study*

The first thorough-going effort to analyze prevailing attitudes toward public personnel was Leonard White's study of the prestige value of public employment. In the two segments of the study,<sup>3</sup> Dr. White and his staff interviewed some eleven thousand persons, requesting them to answer completion questions so as to indicate their attitudes toward certain qualities of public employees as compared to private workers. Among other things, the investigators discovered that only about 11 per cent of the sample interviewed considered that government workers in Chicago were superior to private employees in such qualities as efficiency, honesty, and courtesy. If this accurately represented the prevailing impression of Chicago's public service, as it probably did, local officials could do one of two things: (1) in case employees actually were falling below current standards of efficiency, honesty, and courtesy, take steps to pull them up; or (2) if they were not below par, but the public thought they were, adopt measures to inform the public of the facts.

As Dr. White convincingly points out, low prestige means limited drawing power in the field of recruitment, as well as a low level of morale on the part of the whole body of employees. Can a personnel agency afford to ignore public attitudes which are bound to affect its operations so directly and so vitally? Will not the knowledge of such attitudes provide a logical basis for determining the type and character of the publicity and other public relations policies that should be followed up? For those interested in exploring the "two-way street," a phase of public relations that has been generally neglected, Dr. White's studies offer many valuable aids.

*Cincinnati Study*

It was stated above that relatively simple techniques for valid measurement of attitudes already exist. To demonstrate these

<sup>3</sup>Leonard D. White, *The Prestige Value of Public Employment in Chicago*, University of Chicago Press (1929) and *Further Contributions to the Prestige Value of Public Employment*, University of Chicago Press (1932).

techniques in operation within an established civil service jurisdiction, a survey was conducted under the auspices of this Committee in cooperation with the Cincinnati Civil Service Commission in the summer of 1939. The survey consisted of two parts, one having to do with a large, although incomplete, sampling of the public's attitudes toward the public service in general, and the second dealing with the reaction of those who had gone over the recently issued annual report of the Commission. These studies will be briefly discussed. For more complete treatment see Appendix B.

*General Survey.* In making this survey a Likert scale consisting of thirteen questions was used. Five points of view with respect to each statement were provided so that one could check his opinion in a range from decided approval to decided disapproval. The complete questionnaire or instrument is reproduced in Appendix B.

The sample of the public chosen did not meet all of the requirements of a satisfactory cross section, but it did offer a fairly good coverage. The primary interest of the Committee in this investigation was to demonstrate methods of attitude testing rather than to sound out the opinion of Cincinnatians in a comprehensive way. The Likert instrument was presented in interviews with representatives of each of several publics. Included were candidates for public employment, active members of the Charter group,<sup>4</sup> public officials, newspapermen, labor leaders, party leaders, businessmen's clubs, representative young people, and the unemployed. Also included were all those who received the Civil Service Commission's annual reports.

An analysis of the results of the survey will be found in Appendix B. It will be noted here only that, taken as a whole, those approached were mildly favorable to the conduct of the personnel service in Cincinnati and that adverse criticism did not reach serious proportions.

It is believed that studies of this sort may readily be adapted

<sup>4</sup>A kind of political party organized when the council-manager charter was adopted in Cincinnati. This group supports council candidates favorable to the present charter.

to other localities and that similar surveys may easily reveal points at which personnel policy might be improved. They will also determine the existence and indicate the extent of any positive public opinion favorable to public employment in general and the merit system in particular.

*Attitudes toward Publicity and Suggestions.* Two instruments were used in measuring reactions to the annual report and the publicity methods of the Commission, and a third provided the opportunity for suggestions for improvement in the choice of publicity media.

The first instrument was a tested psychophysical scale measuring favor and disfavor toward the report. The second form dealt with reactions toward the outward appearance and content of the annual report, and the third form contained a list on which preference could be expressed as to the most effective ways of presenting information about the civil service system and the city's personnel program.<sup>5</sup>

Eighty-eight persons were interviewed and given the opportunity to check the forms just described. This number includes nearly all of those on the mailing list to which the annual report was sent, as well as thirty-five or forty additional persons suggested by the Commission. The individuals so canvassed are those interested in the Commission and its work and have demonstrated an interest in the city's affairs. This group cannot, therefore, be said to be generally representative.

### *New York City Investigation*

In the thought that a broader coverage could be secured because of the wide distribution of the annual report of the New York City Civil Service Commission, arrangements were made to use one of the ballot forms described above with the recipients of that Commission's report. Copies of the psychophysical scale ballot permitting various degrees of favorable or unfavorable reaction toward the report were included in each of three thousand reports distributed by the Commission. Those interested in

<sup>5</sup>These forms were developed by Professor Beyle, a member of the committee. However, a considerable amount of advice was received and accepted from others.

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the survey were asked to forward their impressions to the chairman of this Committee. The results of this survey are presented in Appendix D.

### *World's Fair Study*

In order to secure an even more extensive sampling of public opinion concerning the public service, a poll was conducted at the New York World's Fair in cooperation with the New York City Civil Service Commission and the International Business Machines Corporation. The findings of this study are reported in Appendix E. They indicate a number of tasks for the publicity and public relations men of personnel agencies.

### CONCLUSIONS

It has often been stated that public opinion is the most potent force in democracy. If this be accepted it would seem almost mandatory for those responsible for the conduct of government to find out through systematic methods what the public thinks of its government in its various activities. It is our firm belief that surveys such as those described in these pages have a definite place in the administration of governmental affairs, and that the forms used in the above investigations have much suggestive value. They may be further refined and readily adapted to use in any locality.

As Mosher and Kingsley have pointed out in their *Public Personnel Administration*, one of the major obstacles to the improvement of the public service is the lack of popular interest and understanding, as well as downright adverse stereotypes of the public generally. Through surveys of the type just described it should be possible to discover at what points the several publics are given to fallacious thinking, serious misconceptions, and blindness. In this manner, it should also be possible for public personnel agencies to discover those policies that are generally accepted, as well as those that are resisted or questioned. With such material in hand, the public relations unit of a personnel agency may acquaint itself both with the objectives to which its publicity may wisely be directed and with the publics to which

appeals may most profitably be made. But most important of all, attitude surveys may open the eyes of those responsible for management to shortcomings in the established procedures and methods of their organizations and lead to improvements of a substantive nature that will make of the public service a better instrument for satisfying the requirements of the public.

In the long run the very existence of a democracy depends upon public approval and public participation. These are to be brought about not only by doing those things which the public wants done and doing them well, but also by keeping the public informed and interested in how it is being served. By these means the partnership relationship which lies at the base of the democratic way of life may be made vital and the evils of a self-serving bureauracy avoided. If these objectives of a public relations program are accepted as valid, administrative officials of every sort are bound to cultivate this sector of their responsibilities much more intensively than has customarily been done. As the navigator daily takes his bearings by the sun and stars, so also should the public official constantly check his course by a scrutiny of the public mind.

## Chapter IV

### **Administrative Policies and Organization**

TO A substantial number of people the term public relations means little more than publicity, but the conception which must underlie a sound public relations program is much more comprehensive. While the personnel agency's public relations division has a vital interest in publicity work, it is concerned beyond that with all impressions made on the public by any means whatever. The public is being continuously served and is in more or less continuous contact with those who carry on the public business, whether of high or low degree. Out of these contacts grow public attitudes. To win approval, public agencies must mold their policies to conform to public desires—an observation which applies not alone to the behavior, courtesy, and tact displayed in such contacts,<sup>1</sup> but also to quality and promptness of the services performed at every level.

Leading businessmen have long viewed public relations in this light. Their public relations counsel sit with the highest policy-making group. An executive of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company has expressed himself in the following words:<sup>2</sup>

The main emphasis of this [public relations] program is a manner of conducting a business. . . . Publicity is an important part of public relations, but in business, as in most human affairs, what you do is more important than what you say.

Good service, then, is the very basis of good public relations. And good service is not entirely synonymous with technically

<sup>1</sup>A special section is devoted to the personal bearing of those who come into direct contact with the public. This is treated under the subject of informal contacts.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur W. Page, *Fundamentals of a Public Relations Program for Business*, Seventh International Management Conference, Administrative Section, 1938.

efficient service. It is service which, within certain limits, gives the publics what they want in the way they want it, and what they want will not always be in line with the "best practices" as the technician knows them.

This is a fact which politicians fully appreciate but which many reformers, personnel technicians, and proponents of good government too frequently ignore. The traditional "economy and efficiency" approach to the improvement of administration has more than once fallen down in practice for just this reason. The expert may not, and as Mary Follett<sup>3</sup> points out, should not, in a democracy march too far ahead of public acceptance of his proposals. This is a hard fact, overlooked by many a practitioner.

#### POLICY AND PUBLIC OPINION

Perhaps the most significant single thing that can be said in a handbook on public relations for any public agency is just this: *Lack of flexibility in adjusting policies and procedures to meet public demand has caused more failures of progressive public administration programs than any other single factor.*

It does not follow from this statement that the public agency must be a reed bending in the gusts of pseudo-opinion created by every pressure group. Nor need it inertly accept attitudes that spring from ignorance and prevailing misconceptions. In the light of such considerations the following suggestions may serve as guideposts:

1. Serious efforts should be made to learn the attitudes of the publics concerned toward various policies and practices.
2. Every new or proposed policy or procedure should be examined in the light of its probable effect upon established attitudes.
3. Where it seems likely that an innovation will conflict with existing attitudes of one or more publics, it should be adjusted so far as possible to avoid such conflicts without compromising the fundamentals of effective administration.
4. Where conflict is inevitable the new policy or procedure

<sup>3</sup>Mary P. Follett, *Creative Experience* (New York: 1924).

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should be introduced slowly, with every effort to educate the publics concerned to its necessity and desirability.

To follow these precepts may require the renunciation of some innovation dear to the heart of the expert who conceived it. On occasion it may even mean postponing the adoption of desirable policies. Although following these suggestions may require delays, disregarding them may mean the breakdown of a program. Examples are plentiful in the experience of personnel and other agencies of the breakdown of a major reform because of a failure to conform in some relatively minor matter to public desires or the prevailing public understanding.

These principles of administrative prudence are not at all new or particularly profound. The almost instinctive knowledge as to when to advance, when to stand still, and when to fall back is a basic quality of any successful campaigner, civil as well as military.

To some extent, leading personnel agencies have given attention to this aspect of public relations. Thus a representative of the California State Personnel Board reports:<sup>4</sup>

Our first task is to formulate and carry out administrative policies and recruitment programs in which both the state employees and the general public can have confidence.

Again in studying the operations of the Indiana State Bureau of Personnel, field investigators for the Civil Service Assembly found that:<sup>5</sup>

The policies of the personnel agency are always considered in the light of public relations. When the Director reviews an examination he considers the questions from the point of view of public relations. When oral boards are selected, again the policy of selling the merit system is considered. In all of the activities of the personnel program the Director of Personnel makes it a definite policy to use the activities as a public relations program.

A more specific illustration comes from an action of the Personnel Commission of the Los Angeles City Schools, which re-

<sup>4</sup>Louis J. Kroeger, personal letter, May 2, 1939.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted from the unpublished case history study of the Indiana Bureau of Personnel, which administers a joint merit system program covering the State Department of Public Welfare, Unemployment Compensation Division, and Bureau of Maternal and Child Health.



cently abandoned the arbitrary "pass" mark on all examinations, thereby eliminating the eminently bad public relations practice of stigmatizing a large percentage of examinees as "failures."

On the other side of the ledger are many examples of agencies which have done a first-rate technical personnel job but have disregarded public reactions to some relatively minor aspect of their programs and thus left themselves exposed to attack. Up and down the entire line of personnel policies and procedures are spots where considerations of public relations can and should enter. Indeed, the very name "civil service commission" has been challenged on public relations grounds. The assertion has frequently been made that this term bears a "policeman" connotation in the public mind. As a consequence, in model laws and among recently established agencies, the term has at times been abandoned in favor of "Employment Commission" or simply "Personnel Department." The advocates of the system now speak of the "merit system" or "career service," rather than "civil service."

Again the use of the word "examination" has been questioned by David Jennings, who says:<sup>6</sup>

. . . for some positions it might be well if we could get rid of the word "examination" altogether. The word takes us back to school-room days and conjures up unpleasant memories. The businessman does not speak of holding examinations for positions, although that is what he actually does. He interviews, investigates past performance, and perhaps requires a demonstration.

Basic questions of terminology are perhaps often beyond the control of the individual personnel administrator. He can, however, examine every step in his procedure for public relations "boners." This observation applies to announcements of examinations, timing and content of examinations, application forms, reports of failures and, in fact, almost every phase of the agency's activities. Public relations are constantly in the making. The personnel agency will do well to cultivate sensitiveness toward

<sup>6</sup>David Jennings, "Putting the Practical into Examinations," *Fourteenth Annual Proceedings of the Civil Service Assembly* (1921), p. 52. Quoted in Russell Barthell, *The Public Personnel Agency and the Public*, unpublished, University of Washington (1938), p. 22.

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the probable responses of the public to the whole gamut of its activities.

Although the above illustrations are taken from the field of personnel management, the recommendation applies generally to every branch of government. The attitude surveys described in the preceding chapter represent a device which can be used advantageously in discovering not only what the public thinks in general concerning an agency, but also for sounding out opinion with reference to attitudes on individual operating policies, whether already in effect or proposed. To check such responses should be looked upon as a routine task of management.

### ORGANIZATION FOR SOUND PUBLIC RELATIONS

According to our analysis, the public relations problem can best be set up by reference to the publics concerned and their present attitudes. The next question involves the organization of forces to meet the problem so defined. Who should be responsible for the program? Who should carry it out?

#### *Responsibility for Public Relations*

The generalizations set forth in this report are applicable not only to the personnel agency but to each department of government and to the governmental jurisdiction as a whole. Although certain aspects of a well-balanced public relations program may be peculiar to one or another functional unit, the program of a single unit will be influenced by, and in turn will doubtless influence, that of the total government of which it is a part. It is our belief that public relations must be an integral part of the program of governmental administration. From policy-forming officials, such as the chief executive and operating supervisors, down to the office boy, all must be persuaded to look at their actions in the light of public attitudes.

Because of their greater responsibility and the greater attention which is paid to their actions, the highest officials have a particularly significant role to play. The support of the chief executive is as important to the success of the public relations

program as is the success of the public relations program to the chief executive.

It has therefore been suggested frequently that the basic responsibility for such a program should be vested in a special staff unit directly responsible to the chief executive. There are further reasons for such centralization: (1) effective public relations work requires personnel trained in special techniques, and (2) the maintenance of full-time public relations personnel is beyond the needs or financial ability of any but the largest administrative units. If a central bureau exists, the public relations function of the individual agency will be limited to compiling and providing information requested by the bureau and carrying out its suggestions with regard to the public relations aspects of the agency's work. There are very few such central public relations units, although in the larger cities and the states a newspaperman is often employed to serve as the channel for news items. Such an official is usually a publicity agent in the narrower sense of the term.

Because most public personnel agencies are still more or less outside the regular administrative structure of the governments they serve, this report is concerned chiefly with situations in which the personnel agency must carry on its own public relations work. Should a central agency take over this task the suggestions made could readily be adapted to the new situation.

Within the individual agency the principle of centralization applies. That is, the responsibility for public relations should be centered in the office of the administrative head of the agency so far as possible. The head himself should in all cases be the nerve center of the program. In very small agencies he would probably personally take over the work involved. Where he has an assistant who has some training and experience in publicity techniques the latter might well take the public relations activities under his wing.

The Milwaukee County Civil Service Commission illustrates the plan proposed. There the executive officer of the agency is the nerve center or the central pivot of the public relations program. The chief examiner contacts examination committees

personally and keeps in touch with pressure groups of all sorts. The practice has also been adopted of utilizing commissioners to contact persons or organizations at the request of the chief examiner. It might be added that the staff of the Civil Service Assembly which surveyed twenty-two agencies found that, apart from the Milwaukee County Civil Service Commission and a few other jurisdictions, few instances were found in which efforts have been made to cultivate public relations in a well-planned, systematic way.

There is a point at which an agency becomes too large and its public relations problems too insistent to be handled as incidental to another job. Then a full-time specialist in public relations should be appointed. The qualifications for such a person may be varied. However, a broad knowledge of the problems of the agency, together with experience and skill in newspaper work or related fields, should be required. As an illustration the specifications used by the State of New York in a recent examination for public relations assistants follow<sup>7</sup>:

<sup>7</sup> ASSISTANT INFORMATION SERVICE REPORTER, Division of Placement and Unemployment Insurance, Department of Labor. Usual salary range \$2,600 to \$3,225. Appointment expected at the minimum with \$235 annual increment for satisfactory service. Appointment may be made at less than \$2,600.

*Duties:* Under general supervision, to be responsible for the gathering of information and the writing and revising of original news articles and copy for publications of the Division of Placement and Unemployment Insurance and the handling of printing orders including layout and makeup; to assist in planning informational material for distribution; to contact and advise local managers in any matters affecting relations with the public; to do related work as required. Examples: Writing new material from information gathered or furnished; preparing copy for publication; keeping local managers informed of all departmental policies affecting the public; assisting in planning informational material for distribution locally; assisting local managers in establishing and maintaining proper press relations; advising and assisting them in the preparation and placing of publication material; collecting local data for general distribution throughout the State; preparing and delivering addresses, both platform and radio, and assisting in the preparation of schedules of addresses whenever necessary to cover local situations.

*Minimum Qualifications:* Candidates must meet the requirements of one of the following groups: either (a) six years of satisfactory experience in journalistic reporting, editing and promotion on a daily newspaper, at least one year of which shall have been on difficult and responsible work, and graduation from a standard senior high school course; or (b) graduation from a recognized college or university from a four-year course for which a degree has been granted and four years of satisfactory experience in journalism as described under (a) including the one year of experience on difficult and responsible work; or (c) a satisfactory equivalent combination of the foregoing education and experience. Candidates must have had experience in the preparation and presentation of material through various publicity media, particularly radio. Candidates must have a

The fact that the New York State Civil Service Commission and a limited number of other agencies have formally outlined such specifications gives authority to our recommendation that the public relations phases of a public agency's work are of sufficient importance to warrant a definite assignment to a qualified person. Everyone has a share in carrying out a good policy, but someone should be made responsible both for devising it and for supervising its execution.

### *Arrangements for Public Relations*

Whoever is chiefly responsible for the public relations program will require assistance from two sources, one within and the other outside the administration. All staff members of the jurisdiction should cooperate on three fronts: first, to provide the public relations unit, if and when requested, with any and all information which comes within their ken; second, to carry out the suggestions of the public relations unit with regard to forms, procedures, and practices in so far as they may affect the public; and third, to keep the public relations unit posted on all evidences of public attitudes which appear in their day-to-day contacts. All complaints, suggestions, and unusual difficulties in dealing with the public should be brought to the attention of the public relations unit.

From outside the agency two types of assistance are needed. The first is special technical assistance, such as the services of artists, photographers, layout men, and special consultants on radio, movies, and other media. They may come either from other branches of the government or from private concerns. A second type of outside assistance is desirable in maintaining the impartiality which has been listed as a major desideratum of public reporting. Here a plan that appears feasible, although

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general knowledge of the purpose and intent of the New York State Labor Law, of industrial and labor relations, specific knowledge of the New York State Unemployment Insurance Law, of the principles, policies and practical operation of State Employment Service offices; ability to gather and organize information and to write and speak clearly and forcibly on subjects pertaining to unemployment insurance and State Employment Service offices; good knowledge of English, spelling and punctuation; good knowledge of the principles and practices of the printing trade; good judgment, tact and initiative.

to our knowledge it has not yet been tried, would be to press into service a small informal reviewing committee made up of secretaries of civic organizations and leading citizens to go over important proposed public relations efforts while they are still in the planning stage. Their approval of the report or practice suggested might add to its effectiveness and tend to forestall the charge of partisanship or propaganda.

Parenthetical reference should be made at this point to the relationship between local personnel agencies and the National Civil Service Reform League, the Civil Service Assembly, and state organizations interested in civil service reform. It would seem almost mandatory that the programs of these groups be brought into harmony so that they may supplement, and not work at cross purposes with one another. The National Civil Service Reform League is avowedly an agency for the aggressive promotion of the merit system. The functions of the Civil Service Assembly, however, are of a different nature. The Assembly may be classified as an educational, scientific, and professional group. The aid of one or another of these national organizations might be invoked by a local agency, depending upon the strategy called for in any given set of circumstances. The official primarily concerned with public relations in a local unit might well acquaint himself with the activities and the possibilities of aid on the part of these national organizations, in the interest of the public service in the local area.<sup>8</sup>

The limited funds of most agencies mean that the public relations unit must compromise between the demands of a full-fledged program and the demands of other activities. It is almost impossible to determine what personnel agencies are now spending for public relations work. Judging by the meager gestures which have been made in the direction of effective public relations, the amounts spent are probably inadequate. Surely at present standards the returns on additional dollars expended for public relations activity will be very great.

<sup>8</sup>For a summary of what has been done in the past and what division of labor may be hoped for between local agencies and these national associations, see Russell Barthell, *op. cit.*

It is impossible to set a standard of adequacy for all agencies and all situations, since the need for public relations expenditures varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. But it may reasonably be assumed that, if any public relations program worthy of the name is to be adopted, an appreciable percentage of the appropriation to the personnel agency will be required.

The preceding chapters of this report have attempted to define the scope of the problem of public relations and to sketch the means of meeting it from the standpoint of organization. Special attention has been directed to the variety of publics which a well-rounded plan must take into account. We next turn to a consideration, first, of the material and content which may be transmitted from the agency and its staff to the public, and, second, of the several media which are available for the transmission of the material selected.

## Chapter V

### The Informational Base

ONE OF the chief jobs of the public relations division is to provide a continuous flow of information to everyone concerned. This is the public reporting sector of the program. The information should be as clear and complete as possible up to the limits of the capacity of the various publics to absorb it. Understanding is a prime factor in establishing a rapport between the agency and its publics—the ultimate objective of the public relations program. Facts are the flesh and blood of the system. The analyses of publics and contact points are only guides to the effective use of facts. All the arts of presentation to be discussed are merely vehicles for carrying this body of information and making it attractive and acceptable to the publics.

Varying needs and the profusion of potentially useful facts point to the necessity for selection. As the initial step in this process, it is suggested that a comprehensive standardized list of desirable reportable items be set up. Once determined, such a list will serve as a basis for the various phases of the reporting system. The record-keeping activities of the several branches of the personnel agency can then be directed toward the procurement of the desired data, and from this flow of records all reports will be prepared. Such a master list may be termed the *informational base* of the reporting system. In general, determination of the desirable elements in this base must rest with the central agency and might well be influenced by the combined judgments of a number of personnel directors. What its constituent elements should be will be canvassed in the following section, and this may serve as a guide to individual personnel agencies in selecting and adapting the suggested items to their



local needs. It is assumed that other items than those on the list will be introduced as time and occasion may dictate.

#### ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS OF REPORTS

In considering the problem of the contents of reports, an original master check list of personnel information was prepared. Fifty-one current reports of personnel agencies and thirteen sets of recommendations proposed by committees or individuals especially interested in reporting were reviewed. Their analysis not only provided material for the master check list but also indicated the lack of agreement on material worthy of public attention. Since there is no standardization, comparisons cannot be made among similar jurisdictions—comparisons which would often be illuminating and fruitful.

#### *Content of Available Reports*

The forty jurisdictions whose reports were analyzed consisted of twenty-four cities ranging in size from Glendale, California, to New York City and well distributed geographically over the United States, three counties, nine states, and four federal agencies. Types of reports covered included three general annual reports of governmental jurisdictions, forty-four annual reports of personnel agencies, two periodic publications of personnel agencies, and three special reports. In several cases, more than one report of the same agency was taken into account when reports of different types were available.

The analysis disclosed that some 896 separate items of information were reported by at least one agency. Of these, 574 consisted of numerical data, while 318 were in the nature of narrative discussion. There was everywhere a marked lack of uniformity. Of the 896 items in use somewhere, almost 60 per cent are unique—that is they appeared in only one report. At the opposite extreme, only 110 or some 12 per cent of the items appeared in more than five reports, while only 46 or 5 per cent appeared in more than ten. These forty-six most common items, and the number of reports in which they appeared, are shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. ITEMS APPEARING IN MORE THAN TEN OF FIFTY-ONE REPORTS

<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Item</i>
36.	Total number of applicants
34.	Number of examinees
31.	Number passing examinations
30.	Letter of transmittal
29.	Number of examinations held
29.	Number of civil service commissioners
28.	Number of employees in classified service
27.	Total appropriation and expenditures of the agency
23.	List of examinations held
22.	Number of dismissals
21.	Expenditures for salaries
21.	Expenditures for equipment
21.	Total number of employees on payrolls
21.	Roster of advisory committees, commission, and staff of personnel agency
20.	Number of applicants for each examination
20.	Number passing each examination
19.	Number of resignations
19.	Number of employees transferred
19.	Number of appointments of all types
18.	Number of persons taking each examination
17.	Number failing
17.	Number of appointments to permanent positions
17.	Number of temporary appointments
17.	Number of promotional examinations held
16.	Number of deaths
16.	Number reinstated
16.	Expenditures for advertising
16.	Breakdown by departments of jurisdictional status of employees
15.	Number of meetings held by commission
15.	Miscellaneous expenditures
15.	Digest of significant decisions in hearings, trials, and legal opinions
15.	Number of positions filled by promotion
14.	Length of time personnel agency has been in operation
14.	Expenditures for stationery and supplies
14.	Number of employees suspended
13.	Breakdown by departments of number of employees
13.	List of special examiners
13.	Number of employees laid off
13.	Number of retirements
12.	Number of persons certified
11.	Number of exempt employees
11.	Expenditures for printing
11.	General discussion of adequacy of financing of personnel agency
11.	General discussion of program of classification of positions
11.	Number of non-permanent employees by types by departments
11.	Summary of types of rulings made in appeals to commission

The great variety of items and the concentration on relatively few topics indicate that personnel officials are far from agreement as to what constitutes a well-rounded or consistent picture of their work.

*Expert Recommendations*

Thirteen separate sets of expert recommendations as to the desirable contents of personnel reports are available. Most of them are unpublished and in more or less tentative form. Chronologically they range from the recommendations of the Committee on the Standard Form of Report of the National Assembly of Civil Service Commissions made in 1918, to Ridley's *Specifications for the Annual Municipal Report*.<sup>1</sup> An outstanding effort to bring about standardization was made by a Committee of the Conference on the Science of Government in 1923. Their list, drawn up with a view to developing an appraisal form for personnel work, was subsequently revised. Most of the other studies referred to under this heading were also made with some objective in mind other than that of setting up a desirable list of items for public reporting. However, all these efforts have some bearing on the subject of this chapter.

In view of their diverse aims, it is not surprising that there is little consensus among the various recommendations. The most frequently recommended items were the total number of applicants, the total number of examinations held, and the number of efficiency ratings recorded. Other items on which at least five experts agreed were:

1. Percentage of total employees in competitive class
2. Total number of employees in noncompetitive class
3. Ratio of number of employees in noncompetitive class to number of employees in classified service
4. Ratio of number of employees in exempt class to total number in classified service
5. Total number of employees in labor class
6. Aggregate salary of civil service commissioners
7. Expenditure for postage

<sup>1</sup> Clarence E. Ridley and Herbert A. Simon, *Specifications for the Annual Municipal Report*, International City Managers' Association (Chicago: 1939).

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8. Expenditure for telephone and telegraph
9. Total salary payments by jurisdictional classes
10. Number of provisional appointments
11. Number of candidates examined for promotion
12. Number of efficiency rating periods per year
13. Number of efficiency ratings recorded for a typical rating period
14. Number of efficiency ratings revised
15. Number of employees retired on account of inefficiency

The general discrepancy shown in the foregoing lists testifies to the fact that experts and practitioners are no closer to mutual agreement than are the practitioners among themselves or the experts among themselves. The analysis indicates that, in setting up an informational base, no generally accepted standards are available. However, the analysis of present reporting practices and expert recommendations may serve a useful purpose. We may reasonably assume that there was some justification for the inclusion of each of the items covered in the various sources and that by pooling all items, no important phase of public personnel administration will be omitted. With this series of items in hand, it seemed that selections might be made by those competent to pass on the significance of each item, and by this means a composite judgment registered as to what constitutes the desired informational base. This appears to be at least a sensible, if not a scientific, move in the direction of standardization of reports. The next section deals with a description of the method used and the results which followed from this inquiry.

### *Recommended Items for Information Base*

In developing a method for standardizing the informational base, it seemed desirable to use a method which would preserve the values both of present practice and of expert recommendations, but which would at the same time cut out the dead wood—incidental items and those of no particular importance. By this process it should be possible to isolate reportable items which possess significance, reader-interest, and procurability. To this end the techniques of measurement used in building psycho-

physical scales were adapted for determining the informational base according to the combined judgments of competent critics.

The point of departure was the sources previously described. These were canvassed by line, and each recommended or reported item was entered on the list. It seemed reasonable to assume that any item of the remotest potential value would have appeared in at least one of the sources.

The items were then brought together and arranged in logical order on a master list. The master list included a judgment rating scale with rating positions from "0" to "10" beside each item. Ratings were then obtained from a number of experts who marked each item as to its degree of diagnostic value, i. e., the extent to which the item was considered significant in terms of efficient and effective conduct of the public personnel agency. The results of this rating of the diagnostic value of reportable items will be found in Appendix A.<sup>2</sup> The three criteria are defined as follows:

*Diagnostic value.* The degree to which a given item is significant as an index of the success or failure of the work of the agency as a whole or in some particular aspect. On this criterion the judgments of specialists in public personnel administration have been sought as an initial step. It is thought that the sifting out of extraneous and insignificant items can be most satisfactorily handled by such specialists.

*Interest value.* The degree to which the item is capable of being presented in such a way that it will be read and understood by the particular public to which it is addressed. Separate ratings are to be made by representatives of each of the major publics. Thus the unit cost of proctoring examinations is of interest to the personnel administrator but not to the average citizen. This inquiry will be directed to two publics—members of civic groups who have a special interest in government, such as the National League of Women Voters, community councils, governmental reformers, and teachers and representatives of the rank and file of the citizenry. It is believed that on the basis

<sup>2</sup>This technique is an adaptation of the psychophysical method of scale building used by Beyle and Kingsley in their *New Employee Evaluation Scale* (1935).

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of the returns the well-administered agency will have a guide to the items that should be covered and to the methods of presentation that should be followed in reports designed for the layman.

*Availability.* The relative difficulty of obtaining the given item from the record systems in use by operating agencies. Such ratings should be made by persons immediately in touch with record systems in operation.

When all ratings have been obtained they can be averaged and a median position obtained for each item with regard to each characteristic. The range of ratings on each item will probably be so great as to preclude exact mathematical reliance on the median position. However, it seems clear that several major types of items will be distinguishable when the three-fold ratings are completed:

1. Items of high diagnostic value and high interest value which are available without too much difficulty. Such items could be strongly recommended for immediate and general inclusion in the informational base. Much of this material will be useful in all reports.

2. Readily available items of high diagnostic value but of moderate or low interest value. Such items could reasonably be recommended for inclusion only in the more detailed departmental reports and excluded from reports intended for the general public.

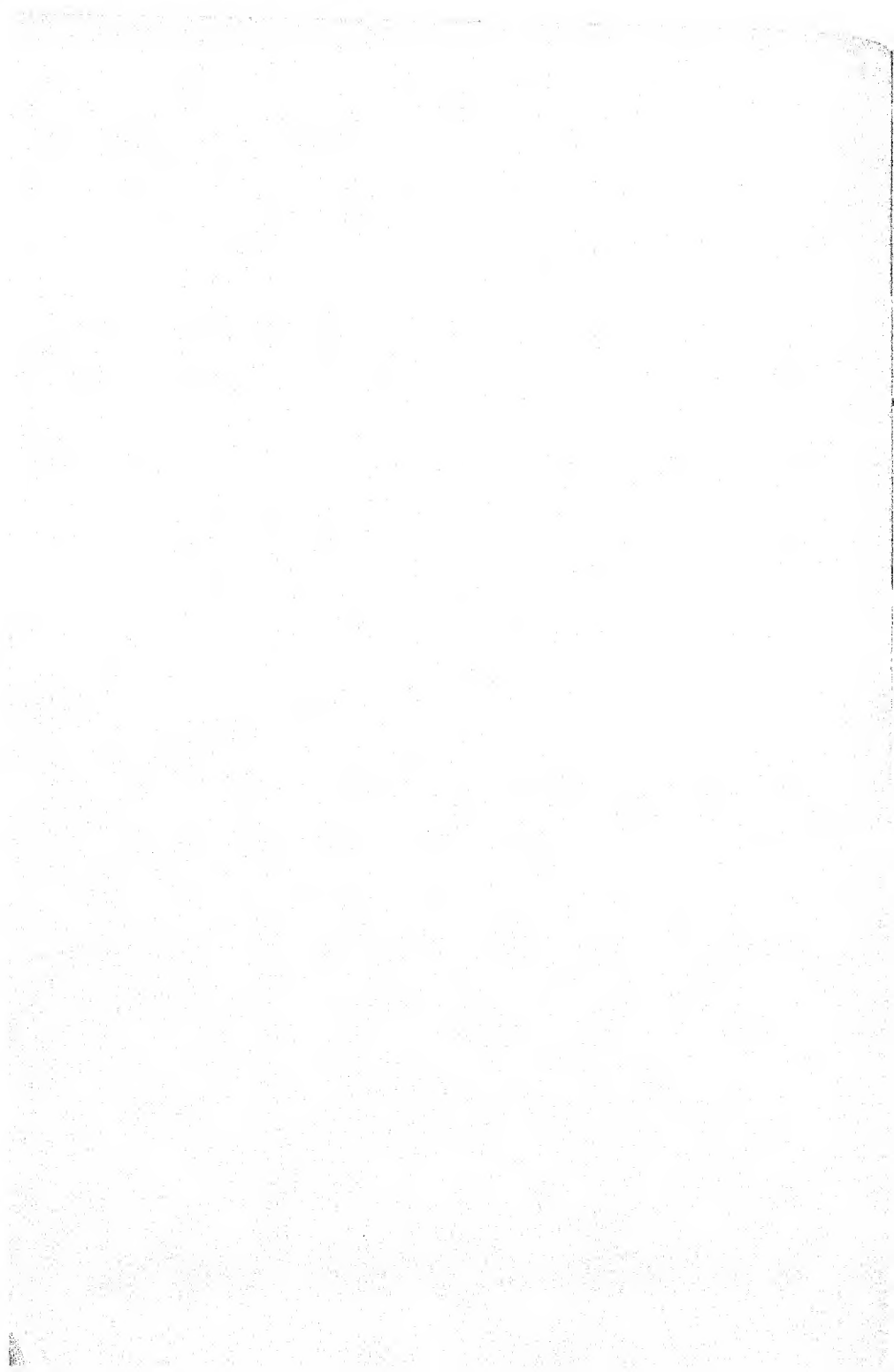
3. Items of high diagnostic value and considerable interest value but which are not now readily available. Strong recommendation could be made that record systems be revised so as to yield such items.

4. Items of low diagnostic value and moderate or low interest value. Such items could be definitely consigned to the wastebasket and no further effort expended on them.

A residue would remain of borderline items or items on which there was no consensus as to relative value. These could be left for experimental use with a view to more definite determination of their value at a later time.

In such terms, then, a standardized informational base may be drawn up and recommended as a guide to practitioners.

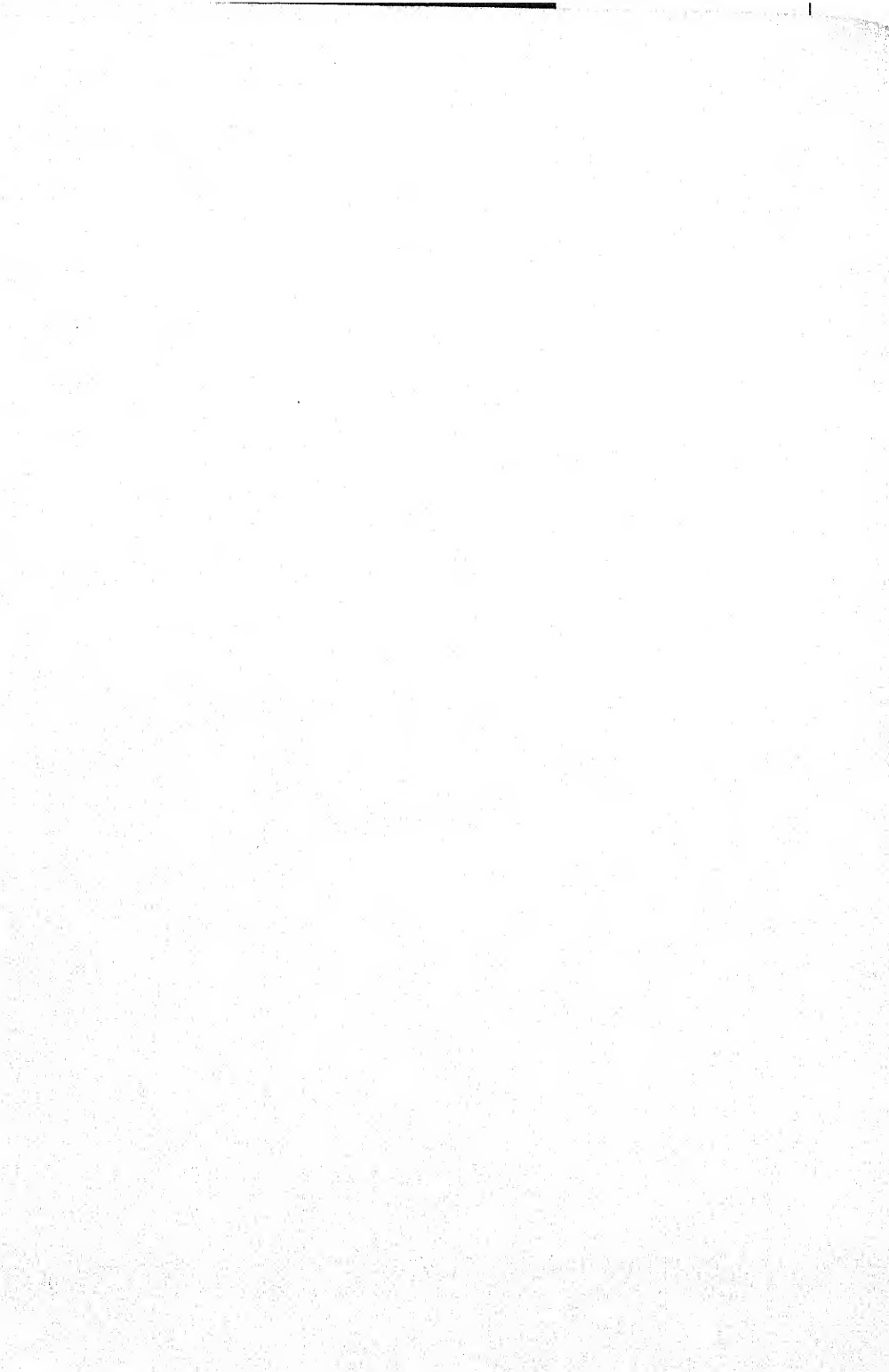
It should be noted that the consideration of diagnostic value is the most important and probably the most stable of the three criteria described. After determination of the items most valuable on this score, efforts can be made simultaneously to revise records and to promote civic education so that eventually the information will become available and a demand for it arise because of its significance.





**PART II**

**Public Relations Media**



## *Chapter VI*

### **Government Publications**

THE approach to a program of public relations here presented has emphasized analysis of the agency's publics and their attitudes. A standardized informational base has been recommended. The next step is to put this accumulated knowledge to work, to implement it so that the agency and its publics pull together. This involves, first, the allocation of various parts of the public relations load to the media best adapted for their presentation, and, second, the determination of ways and means for the most effective utilization of each medium. Such allocation is in line with the earlier generalization that there must be a *system* of public relations, rather than spasmodic efforts that give no heed to the study of ways and means.

Potentially useful media include almost every known means for the communication of facts and ideas. Books, pamphlets, dodgers, and every other form of published material; the newspapers; radio and motion pictures; speeches, exhibits, and tours of inspection, as well as all types of formal and informal personal contacts, are included in the armory of the public relations director.

Specialists have brought each of these media to a high state of development, and the literature on any one of them is voluminous. Although most of this development has been brought about by private agencies, many of the techniques are readily transferable to the public field. The most that can be attempted in a report of this character is to indicate the present use and proper place of each medium in the government public relations program, and to summarize briefly the most important standards for the handling of each. References will be made to standard sources where such are readily available.

## USE OF REPORTS

Written and published materials of one sort or another are the oldest and most widely used method of putting the achievements and problems of an agency before its publics. This type of material inevitably carries a large part of the public relations load.

Until very recently almost all government publications were archetypes of unattractive presentation and indigestible content. While purveyors of pianos and patent medicines were attracting interest with pleasing typography and "catchy" copy, the managers of democratic government continued to issue reams of statistical tables set in six-point type—if they made any attempt at all to tell the public what they were doing. The past decade has seen a cumulative improvement in the form of public reports, although the standard product still leaves much to be desired.

Four characteristics seem to have inhibited officials from developing readable public documents: (1) apathy; (2) the legitimate fear of slipping over the borderline between public reporting and propaganda; (3) lack of knowledge and skill in the arts of publication; and (4) the failure to recognize the necessity for breaking down the public reporting program into a system of reports to fit the needs of the various publics.

Most officials, when they report at all, put everything they have in *the* annual report. The resulting product has been aptly designated by Beyle as an "omnibus report." Dr. Beyle dilates upon this subject as follows:<sup>1</sup>

In their annual volumes, the government reporters . . . are attempting to provide a government manual for high schools and civic clubs, dodgers to capture particular or casual interest, a source book for statistical students, a directory and manual for those who have private business to transact at the governmental offices, a prospectus for bond houses, accountants and taxpayers, a road map to greater utilization of the public services, a balanced picture of general operations, a pleading on leading issues and solutions, a brochure

<sup>1</sup>Herman C. Beyle, *Governmental Reporting and Public Relations* (mimeographed, 1938).

for city advertising and promotion, a memorandum for those who have some voice in the determination of pressing civic policies, an accounting of possessions and stewardship, an exposition of new devices and workways, and news accounts of unique developments, all rolled into one.

It is obvious that what is needed is to break down this omnibus report into its constituent parts, to give each public the information it wants and will absorb, and to time and present it in the fashion which will make it most useful. The analysis of publics and contact points previously made provides a guide to such a program. In this connection, it is possible to group documentary presentations into four classes, running a gamut from no popularization to extreme popularization as characterized by the following types:

1. The report for administrative use by the agency staff, legislators, and the chief executive.
2. The report for technical publics—employees, operating officials, other personnel agencies, and researchers.
3. The report for the high-interest general public—candidates for employment, civic leaders, teachers, and the like.
4. The report for the incidentally interested citizen who reads as he runs.

In general the types of information to be covered may be listed as: (1) reports on standard, infrequently changing information; (2) periodic reports on continuing operations; and (3) reports on special problems of more or less immediate import.

To make this analysis particularly useful, a specific series of documents will be described, in which, ideally, the material might be embodied. For each document present usage will be indicated and suggestions made as to its purpose, form, and content. Of course, only the largest personnel agencies would be able to undertake the entire series of publications suggested. But with the complete program in mind, an agency can make such adaptations, consolidations, and compromises as are necessary to fit the program to its own needs and the restrictions of its own pocketbook.

## REPORTS ON STANDARD INFORMATION

In keeping with the foregoing analysis, the publications presenting standard information will be discussed first.

*Laws, Rules, and Regulations*

The laws, rules, and regulations under which the agency operates are the technical basis of its program. Their place in the public reporting picture is to supply standard information to administrative and technical publics. The present practice ranges from no public record to publication as a part of the annual omnibus report. Either extreme is obviously bad.

Since in most jurisdictions the clerk of the legislative body is charged with the duty of preserving and publishing all laws, to get such material offers no particular problem to the agency. Where administrative regulations are not included in the regular routine of ordinance publication, and where the whole is not codified, the personnel agency may well keep loose-leaf books of laws, rules, and regulations. Such books should be thoroughly indexed and revised with sufficient frequency to keep them current.<sup>2</sup> Unless printing is legally required, such material might well be struck off by an inexpensive duplicating process. Each topic should occupy a separate sheet so that new sheets can be inserted when changes are made. Except in the very largest jurisdictions one or two dozen complete books will be sufficient. Members of the legislative body, the chief executive, the legal counsel, heads of operating departments, key members of the agency staff, local law libraries, and local and national research organizations should each have a copy. A few additional copies for file and reference purposes will round out the distribution of the material. Additional sheets on each special section should be kept on file to be distributed to lawyers, employees, and researchers who may be interested. By limiting distribution in this way, much of the printing cost which now goes into production and

<sup>2</sup>The decimal indexing system used by the Personnel Commission of the Los Angeles City Schools is worth noting. See *Law and Rules*, Personnel Commission (October, 1938).

distribution of dust-gathering copies of such material may be saved for more active media.

### *Classification and Pay Plans*

When classification and pay plans are first developed, the documents in which they are published are, by their very nature, special problem reports and as such will be treated below. Once established, such plans usually become a part of the laws and rules, and their publication and distribution should be so handled. Special effort should be made to see that the complete plan or appropriate sections of it are made available to prospective employees for reference purposes.

One of the major wastes under a limited public relations budget is the periodic reproduction of the complete classification and pay plans in omnibus reports for general distribution. Such widespread publication obviously serves no purpose that could not as well be served by a brief summary. Yet these plans are frequently the longest and most expensive parts of the published reports.

### *The Procedure Manual*

The procedure manual is intended primarily as a means of presenting detailed and explicit information on specific points of operation to staff members of the agency. However, the manual or certain sections of it might well be distributed to operating officials as a guide in filling out requisition forms, making efficiency ratings, and arranging separations. Such manuals are now used by the personnel agencies in the cities of Berkeley, California, and Dallas, Texas, the State of Michigan, and the Tennessee Valley Authority, as well as elsewhere. In general they should be brief and to the point. They should be reproduced as inexpensively as possible and distributed only to those directly responsible for the carrying out of procedure.

### *The Personnel Handbook*

The best means of providing standard information to employees and high-interest general publics is the personnel hand-

book. It is also a key tool in removing some of the material that clutters up the omnibus report. Such books have been prepared by the United States Civil Service Commission, the Connecticut State Personnel Department, and the Department of State Employment and Registration of Maryland.

A handbook need be replaced only when some major change is made in organization or method. But when it is published every effort should be made to produce as good a job as possible. If it is properly prepared the handbook will be one of the most fruitful publications of the agency, both in saving time and in building morale. In general, the content of the handbook should be devoted largely to material that will provide answers for the many questions that arise concerning policies and procedure of the personnel agency. Among the items that should be considered for inclusion in the handbook are the following:

1. The history, objectives, and philosophy of the merit system.
2. The story of the origin of the personnel agency, and a description of its structure and functions.
3. An explanation of the allocation of responsibility for the personnel function between the personnel agency and line officials, employees, and others.
4. A summarization of legal and administrative provisions relating to such subjects as qualifications for employment (residence restrictions, preference, and similar points); examinations and appointments; classification and pay; training programs, service evaluation, and promotion; hours of work and leaves of absence; employee welfare programs; discipline and appeals; and, finally, separations and retirement.

The handbook should not be too long; every effort should be made to present its content in brief but readable fashion. The use of large type, photographs, organization and flow charts (especially of the pictograph variety) will make the handbook attractive as well as informative. Plentiful use of headings and the inclusion of a table of contents will add to the book's usefulness.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>A recent publication of the United States Civil Service Commission, *Federal Employment Under the Merit System* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1940), embodies many of the suggestions that have been made concerning desirable content for a personnel handbook.



The distribution of the handbook should be as wide as practicable. Legislators, operating department heads and supervisors, heads of all civic groups, vocational counselors, and educators should be included. Every incoming employee should be given a copy. While considerations of cost would probably preclude distribution to all prospective employees, volumes should be freely available in libraries and at the agency office for their inspection.

### *The Information Kit*

A particularly attractive and useful means of supplying both standard and current information to members of legislative bodies has been developed by the California State Personnel Board, which supplies an information kit to each legislator. Made up of a standard size (8½ x 11") manila file folder, the outside front of the kit contains brief bits of interesting general information about the state service. The inside left leaf is constructed as an envelope to receive a semi-monthly summary of forthcoming examinations. The right leaf, also envelope-shaped, is kept supplied with forms for requesting application announcements and application forms themselves. A post card, to be mailed when additional forms are needed, is included. Printed on the outside of the envelope are brief instructions for the use of each form. The back cover presents, in pictograph form, figures on the number of applications, examinations, participants, and appointments for several years past. Also included are one-sentence statements on the amount of payrolls audited, number of state employees, number of veterans employed, age distribution of employees, and length of service of employees. The whole kit is typographically attractive. It furnishes an outstanding example of a public relations device which provides a contact point between the agency and one of its most important publics. The kit provides, in fingertip fashion, the exact materials and information the legislator needs in dealing with job-hunting constituents. Distribution of such a kit might well be extended to include vocational counselors and public employment offices, and similar media for reaching potential applicants.

*The Service Leaflet*

In line with the strategy of providing the information wanted at the point where it will be most useful is the service leaflet series. These leaflets are extremely brief presentations of a single feature of the agency's standard policies or procedures. They answer the most frequent questions of the man in the street, as well as prospective candidates for employment.

Such leaflets are now used to good effect by the United States Civil Service Commission, the Board of Examiners of the Board of Education in New York City, the Bureau of Personnel of the State of Indiana, the Personnel Advisory Board of Saginaw, Michigan, and several other public personnel agencies. A particularly attractive series has been prepared by the Municipal Personnel Service, an advisory and service agency connected with the Michigan League of Municipalities.

In general the material presented in such leaflets is similar to the type of information suggested for the personnel handbook, with certain differences in emphasis. The best guide to topics for leaflets is provided by an analysis of questions in the incoming mail. Both policy and procedures may be explained. The leaflets in the Municipal Personnel Service series have such inviting titles as "Turn Off the Heat" (a contrast between the spoils system and the merit system), and "The Open Back Door" (describing safeguards against permanent employment of inefficient employees). The leaflets issued by the Indiana and Saginaw agencies give brief general instructions on how to apply for merit employment. The New York School Board series deals with the public relations bugbear of the unsuccessful candidate. It contains thorough explanations covering such topics as: "The Enforcement of a Closing Date for the Receipt of Applications"; "What is Meant by 'Failure' on a Competitive Examination"; and "The Meaning of Eligible List Placement." The United States Civil Service Commission has issued leaflets describing job opportunities in the federal service for persons with various types of special training. Many other such topics will suggest themselves to the personnel administrator.

Service leaflets should be brief and attractive. A single 7" square sheet folded once will provide a pocket-sized folder which fits readily into a standard business envelope. Large type, colored paper, and cartoon illustrations invite attention, while brief sentences, frequent headings, and the avoidance of technical phrases assure readability.

Appropriate means for distribution will be determined by the subject matter of each leaflet. For the more general topics, broad distribution is suggested—with tax bills, over the desks in public and school libraries, and to mailing lists of graduating students, members of civic societies, and similar groups. Leaflets on specific subjects can be sent in answer to inquiries and to applicants rejected at various stages in the selection process. A device suggested for getting the leaflets into proper hands is a rack, similar to those used for timetables in railroad stations, placed in the lobby of the city hall or office building.

### *The General Government Handbook*

Means of presenting standard information to administrative, technical, and special-interest publics have been discussed. Except for occasional contact with one or another of the leaflets just described, the man in the street—the taxpaying citizen—is still untouched by the public relations program. This generally ignored, but highly important, member of the community presents a knotty problem to the public relations official. His attitude or whims can wreck the most technically perfect program. And reaching him with the agency's story is extremely difficult. Beset as he is by multitudinous claims upon his attention and having at best only an occasional and tangential interest in government, it is improbable that he can be persuaded to read any of the various publications so far discussed. In general, he will have to be reached through media more sprightly than the official document. Newspapers, radio, motion pictures, speeches, and exhibits stand a better chance of coming within his range of interest. These media, involving as they do special techniques, will be discussed subsequently. Valuable as they are, all of them have the handicap of transiency. Once presented, they disappear,

and the extent to which their message is retained is doubtful.

To provide a minimum of ready-at-hand information for the average citizen, the device of the general government handbook is suggested. As its name indicates, this book is a brief, highly popularized manual describing the structure and procedures of all government departments in terms the citizen can understand. So far as is known, very few jurisdictions have ever issued such a book. Wayne County, Michigan, essayed a volume of this nature several years ago. Many omnibus reports attempt to fulfill this function, to the detriment of their major purpose.

Since the production of such a general book is obviously beyond the scope of any individual agency, discussion of its content and form would be out of place here. The role of the individual personnel agency can consist only in promoting the idea and cooperating fully when such a project is undertaken.

#### REPORTS ON CONTINUING OPERATIONS

We have now discussed the methods of reporting standard background information about the personnel agency to its various publics. Next in order are reports of operating data. There is a clear distinction between these two types of information, but the distinction seems to have been ignored both in the literature and in the practice of government reporting. As a result, reports are either a garbled conglomerate of both types of information, or emphasis is on one to the exclusion of the other. Most of the attention in reporting has been devoted to operating data. In discussing reports containing such material, the different levels of information suited to administrative, technical, high-interest, and general publics must again be emphasized.

##### *Reports for Administrative Officials*

All operating reports are based on the records of the agency's transactions. From the records of individual applications, examinations, appointments, changes in status, payrolls, separations, etc., must flow the whole structure of operating reports by a process which may be termed *successive summarization*. Most of such transaction records will not go beyond the agency

itself and hence will not be considered here. However, they must be planned with a view not only to their immediate usefulness, but also to their value as source material for the series of operating reports to be discussed.

Specifications for desirable record forms for specific personnel operations are presented in the various functional reports which make up the general personnel survey, of which this report is a part.

### *Periodic Statistical Reports*

The documents which go beyond the agency's doors to administrative and technical publics include monthly or quarterly statistical reports and detailed annual reports. Since these are the crux of the reporting system both in present practice and ideally, their purpose, content, form, and distribution will be discussed in considerable detail.

Periodic statistical reports represent the first stage in summarizing the transaction records of the agency. Their purpose is to give a detailed, comprehensive picture of current operations to administrative and technical publics.

The most comprehensive document of this type now issued is the monthly report of the Personnel Division of the Tennessee Valley Authority to the General Manager of the Authority. This report typically contains 34 pages. It is introduced by a detailed narrative statement of the work done by each unit of the personnel agency in the preceding month. The following tables regularly appear:

- Number of personnel department employees by areas
- Number of TVA employees by areas
- TVA turnover summary
- TVA status change
- Number of persons requisitioned for employment
- Refusals of offers of employment
- Number of interviews by personnel employees by types
- General statistics on other duties handled by personnel employees, by divisions

Similar but less voluminous periodic reports are prepared by the personnel agencies of Duluth, Minnesota, Cincinnati, Ohio,

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the State of Wisconsin, and others. These reports are directed primarily to the chief executive. Definite recommendations for the content and form of such reports have been made by Ridley and Simon in their *Measuring Municipal Activities*.<sup>4</sup> The tables which they list as essential are:

- Appointments to the service
- Examinations given
- Personnel inventory by departments
- Leaves, time lost, overtime, and injuries, by departments
- Turnover rate by major occupational classes
- Man-days of service performed by various jurisdictional classes of employees

Since its purpose is to provide a complete picture for the most highly interested publics, the ideal periodic report will obviously include the nucleus of the information which a previous analysis of the informational base has indicated to be of high diagnostic value. Exceptions to this rule, for a particular agency, would include the more complicated indices and ratios based on items in which there are relatively few transactions during such a brief period. Thus, if only one or two transfers have taken place, there would be little point in computing a transfer rate. The only standard for inclusion or exclusion on this basis is a common-sense evaluation of the relative importance of the additional information to be secured, compared with the extra effort necessary to secure it. In most cases data should be given for the current month, the preceding month, the year to date, the same month for the preceding year, and the preceding year to the end of the same month. Very little graphic or textual material will be necessary. Continuing line graphs may be drawn for the most important temporal series, such as turnover rate. Brief paragraphs should explain outstanding or unusual developments.

The distribution list for monthly or quarterly statistical reports should include the following: several copies to the chief executive; a copy to each member of the legislative body if a city, or one to each member of the legislature's committee on civil service if a state; a copy to each civil service commissioner; a copy

<sup>4</sup>International City Managers' Association (1938), pp. 97-99.

to each major department or division head; copies to the central government supervisory agency, if any; a copy to the office of each employee organization; a copy to the local research bureau, if any; a copy to the Civil Service Assembly; copies to heads of major pressure groups; copies to the city hall or capitol press room; copies to keep in the office for inspection; and several file copies.

### *The Detailed Annual Report*

The detailed annual report is *the* report of most personnel agencies which report at all. It is usually the beginning and the end of conscious public reporting efforts. Into it is crammed any and all available information. Maligned as it has been, the annual report will probably continue to carry the major part of the reporting burden. If an agency is able to issue only one document, it will be an annual report. For that reason its nature, content, and form will be discussed in considerable detail.

The purpose of the detailed annual report is to tell technical and high-interest general publics the complete story of one year of the agency's operations. To aid in clearing up the pointlessness and omnibus character of present reports, it will be helpful to isolate the elements to be incorporated in the report in order that it may serve its intended purpose. They are as follows:

*It must tell a story.* Everything in the report should add something of significance and each part should be related to every other and to the whole. Records should not be raided indiscriminately, nor should unrelated data be presented.

*The story must be complete.* No significant phase of the agency's work should be left unreported.

*The story is about operations for the current period.* Only that which is particularly related to the period reported or which is essential to an understanding of current operations should be reported. Recommendations for the coming year are exceptions to this rule and should, of course, be included.

*The story is designed for technical and high-interest general publics.* It is not intended for the administrator or the man in the street. This means that administrative detail can be elimi-

nated and that no efforts need be made to popularize the material by using pictographs, fancy binding, and high-grade paper.

### *Form and Content of Annual Reports*

Of the fifty-two reports reviewed for the purpose of setting up the information base, to say that no two are alike is a triumph of understatement. They vary in content, in shape, and in size. They range from the brief typewritten or mimeographed releases of the Columbus, Ohio, and Evanston, Illinois, Civil Service Commissions to the 100-page bound and handsomely illustrated book issued by New York City Civil Service Commission. Figures 2a and 2b show the size, length, and method of reproduction used in the reports analyzed.

The contents are equally varied. They range from a few statistics on examinations and appointments to New York City's play-by-play account of each operation and suboperation, and the Dominion of Canada's name and address listing of every person appointed or given a new status. The variety of information contained is indicated by the analysis made previously in connection with the informational base. The significant fact about all this variety is that very few reports come anywhere near filling their logical place in the reporting system which has been outlined. Certainly the average report does not.

The general specifications as to form which have been suggested for non-popular reports can be followed here. Since they are not meant to be slipped in the pocket or preserved on library shelves, standard file size of 8½ x 11" is desirable. Offset reproduction on two sides of inexpensive paper is admirably suited to such a document. The cover should be of somewhat heavier stock than the paper used in the body. Simple saddle stapling can be used in binding.

According to the preceding analysis of purpose there should be a reduction in the number of tables, and an increase in the amount of narrative material and in the number of standard graphs. Standard rules for tabular and graphical presentation should be followed.

The detailed annual report should include as many of the





FIGURE 2b. ANALYSIS OF RECENT ANNUAL REPORTS OF 36 PUBLIC PERSONNEL AGENCIES, SHOWING TYPES OF GRAPHS USED, USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS, AND PERCENTAGE OF THE REPORT DEVOTED TO TEXTUAL MATERIAL

Jurisdiction	Bar	Line	Pie	Graphic Media		Maps	Illustrations		Per Cent Covered by Text		
				Flow	Picture		Used	Used	0-25	25-50	50-75 75-100
Arkansas State	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	★	—	—
Baltimore, Md.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	★
California State	★	★	★	★	★	★	—	—	★	—	—
Dominion of Canada	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
Chicago, Ill.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
Cincinnati, O.	★	★	—	★	★	—	★	—	★	—	—
Cleveland, O.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
Columbus, O.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
Detroit, Mich.	★	—	—	★	—	—	—	—	★	★	—
Duluth, Minn.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
Evansville, Ind.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
Illinois State	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
Indiana Bureau of Personnel.	.	.	★	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
Jefferson Co., Ala.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
Long Beach, Cal.	★	★	—	.	★	—	—	—	—	—	—
Los Angeles Co., Cal.	★	★	—	.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Los Angeles City Schools.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
Maryland State	★	—	—	.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Massachusetts State	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
Michigan State	★	★	★	.	.	★	—	—	—	—	—
Milwaukee City, Wis.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
Minneapolis, Minn.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
New Jersey State	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—
New York City	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	★	—	—	—
New York State	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	★	—	—	—
Ohio State	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	★	—	—	—
Philadelphia, Pa.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	★	—	—	—
Phoenix, Ariz.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—	—
Portland, Ore.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—	—
St. Paul, Minn.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—	—
San Diego City, Cal.	★	★	—	.	.	.	.	—	—	—	—
San Diego County, Cal.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—	—
Seattle, Wash.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—	—
Tacoma, Wash.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—	—
T. V. A. Personnel Department.	.	.	.	★	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
U. S. Civil Service Commission.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	9	7	3	6	3	2	3	3	13	9	11 3

items selected on the basis of diagnostic value and reportability as are applicable and available. Copies should be distributed to all legislators; newspapers; division and department heads; local and national research agencies; pressure groups, civic organizations, and employment centers; school and public libraries; and to other personnel agencies throughout the country.

### *The Semi-Popular Periodic Report*

To provide more frequent current information for high-interest general publics and particularly for prospective employees, monthly or bi-monthly periodicals or bulletins may be issued. Such a document should be more popularized than the detailed annual report, but less so than the popular annual report. Enough effort should be expended to make it moderately attractive in form and it should emphasize current items of high interest to the particular publics it serves.

Such periodicals are now issued by the New York City Civil Service Commission and the states of Rhode Island and Michigan, among others. The New York City "Civil Service Bulletin" is issued every month. It is printed in a 6 x 9" format and each issue runs about 60 pages in length. It is sold at \$1 per year, or 10 cents an issue, and has a subscription list of about 4,000. A typical issue contains full announcements and sample questions for forthcoming examinations; brief notes on changes in civil service coverage and techniques; notes on special items regarding developments in the commission's operations; brief announcements of examinations scheduled for local residents in the near future by the federal government and New York State, but for which applications are not yet being received; a summary of progress made on tests already given, mentioning the number of applications received, progress of ratings, etc.; answer keys for examinations recently given; and a guide to appointment possibilities. Instructions are given concerning the steps to be taken by those interested in employment in the New York City service.

By way of contrast, the Michigan "Bulletin" is printed by offset on two sides of a single 8½ x 11" sheet. It lists forthcoming

examinations; gives brief descriptions of various civil service processes; gives personal notes on personnel agency employees; lists figures on general work of the agency; and gives excerpts from letters of complaint and praise received by the agency.

The publication of the Rhode Island Department of Civil Service, "Civil Service Notes," is a pocket-size ( $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$ "), mimeographed pamphlet, issued "now and then," as its cover advertises. To illustrate its content, one issue included a detailed description of the method used by the agency to appraise training and experience of applicants; statistics concerning the outcome of recent examinations (number of applicants, number examined, number on employment list, etc.); a list of forthcoming examinations; a "question box" section; and brief items of news concerning the operations of the agency.

All three of these bulletins seem to be well adapted to their purposes. The type of periodical exemplified by the New York City publication actually answers many potential requests for information about forthcoming examinations, examination announcements, sample questions, news of grading progress, and chances for appointment. Ordinarily, such requests would be met by individual form letters and single sheet announcements, but in a very large agency, with hundreds of such requests every day, it is sound economy to anticipate them by issuing such a bulletin.

The bulletins of the Rhode Island and Michigan agencies also perform a necessary function for a newly established agency in providing frequent semi-popular summaries of progress for legislators, department heads, employees, and prospective employees. A moderate sized, well-established agency, however, might well regard such a bulletin as less urgent than other elements in the reporting system and dispense with it, using instead the periodic administrative report, individual form letters, announcements, the regular monthly "summary of examinations," and newspapers and radio.

If the issuance of such reports is undertaken, a monthly four- or eight-page pocket-size offset printed folder would seem to be desirable. Content could be limited to special progress notes,

lists (but not full-fledged announcements) of forthcoming examinations, and reports of scoring progress. Care should be taken to avoid overlapping the field of the regular examination announcement, the service leaflets previously described, or the popular special problem reports to be discussed below. Distribution should be to legislators, department heads, pressure groups, applicants for employment, libraries, schools, and others.

### *The Popular Annual Report*

The popular annual report will be the most widely circulated official presentation of current information. Its distribution corresponds to that of the general government handbook, although the content of the two volumes will be almost mutually exclusive. Briefly stated, its purpose is to present the minimum essentials of information about current operations to high-interest general publics. The picture presented should be well rounded and the presentation itself extremely brief and attractive. To meet these requirements best, it is recommended that the personnel report be included as a section of a general annual report covering all departments or branches of a given jurisdiction. The production of such a volume is, of course, not a job for the personnel agency alone. However, the agency should lend its encouragement and cooperation in the direction of bettering such general reports.

The 1939 *Municipal Year Book*<sup>5</sup> shows that approximately 100 American cities produced more or less comprehensive and popular annual reports in 1938. No state is known to publish such a volume, with the exception of Kentucky, which last year brought out an excellent report for the state government. The federal government does not do so, although most of the departments and independent establishments publish annual reports.

From the point of view of the personnel agency, it is significant that most general reports contain little or no mention of the problems of personnel administration. Of the hundreds of percentages and ratios defining various governmental activities which Ridley has found in the general annual reports he surveys,

<sup>5</sup> International City Managers' Association (1939).

only one is concerned with the function of personnel management. This is "salary costs as a percentage of the total budget"—not a particularly significant figure. Other personnel activities are completely ignored.<sup>6</sup>

It is incumbent upon the personnel agency to insure that adequate attention is given to the personnel function in such general annual reports. It would be desirable for the personnel agency to be represented on any editorial board that is appointed to oversee the preparation of the report.

In many cases it will be well for the agency to prepare independently a popularized statement concerning its achievements in the preceding year, its plans for the future, and its problems. Such a statement may be especially advisable because of the present need to re-educate the public as to the role and importance of the agency, particularly if plans are under way to recast and expand its functions by assigning it broad personnel responsibilities.

In preparing such a document, modern techniques of presentation should be utilized. The text should be dramatized and be highly readable. Photographs may be used effectively. Dry statistical data may be enlivened through the use of pictorial devices and well-designed graphs. Care should be taken, however, to avoid giving the reader the impression that the writer is "talking down" to him. The best guide for compiling general annual reports is the set of criteria prepared by Ridley and Simon.<sup>7</sup> Twenty standards have been developed and applied to the reports issued by city managers and a few mayors for some ten years. Among these the most important are the following: promptness, attractiveness, inclusion of pertinent illustrative charts, brevity, conciseness, and clear literary style.

Since the whole personnel story must be told in a limited space, only current items of the very highest diagnostic and interest value should be presented. The distribution of such volumes should be similar to that suggested for the general government handbook.

<sup>6</sup> Beyle, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*

## SPECIAL PROBLEM REPORTS

None of the documents so far described provides for presenting what might be termed "spot" information. A change in laws or rules is promulgated; a reorganization is undertaken; an examination is scheduled. The proposals and supporting argument should be brought before the publics concerned immediately; they cannot wait on the next annual or monthly report. Certainly they cannot wait for the next edition of the procedure manual or the handbook. Special problem reports are the answer. A related type of information, lacking to some extent the urgency of this type of special problem, is the discussion of alternatives of procedure and the detailed presentation of particular techniques.

Special problem publications are of four types: the detailed special problem report, the popular special problem report, the examination announcement, and the examination poster. In practice, of course, special problem information is frequently presented in periodic reports of one type or another. Such overlapping leads to confusion and should be avoided as far as possible.

*Detailed Special Problem Reports*

The purpose of the detailed special problem report is to present complete information on issues of immediate interest to administrative and technical publics. While the exact subject-matter of such reports is dictated by circumstances, in general they might well cover among other things:

1. The original classification or pay plan and subsequent revisions.
2. Proposed changes in laws, rules and regulations, organization, and procedures.
3. Results of special research and surveys; the operation of some particular aspect of the personnel program; new practices in other jurisdictions, etc.

Such special problem reports have been used spasmodically by many agencies, largely in connection with classification and

pay plans. As has been mentioned, such material is all too frequently included in current reports of one sort or another. Illustrations of such reports, dealing with subjects other than classification plans, include: the monograph on item analysis prepared by the Personnel Division of the Los Angeles City Schools; the report on the qualifying examination program issued by the Michigan State Civil Service Commission; and the monograph, *Machine Procedures in Personnel Work*, published by the same agency.

The form of special problem reports should be in keeping with their purpose. Mimeographing or offset publication in 8½ x 11" size is recommended. No attempt at illustration beyond essential graphs and flow charts need be made.

The exact content of the special problem report will, of course, be dictated by its subject-matter. In general, however, the report should include the historical and analytical background of the problem and reasons for proposed actions, as well as the actual proposals made.

Distribution should be to the list of administrators, legislators, operating officials, technicians, and members of interest groups suggested in the discussion of the detailed periodic reports.

### *Popular Summaries*

At times it may be advisable to summarize special problem reports in leaflet form for more popular consumption among the rank and file of employees, citizen groups, and the like. An example is the folder distributed by the New Haven Taxpayers association, dealing with the classification and pay program sponsored by that group.

Governmental research bureaus (Philadelphia, Detroit, and Buffalo, for example), have long utilized bulletins of limited scope to interpret the results of research studies and constructive proposals growing out of them. They are written in vigorous and popular style and are designed for the intelligent layman who has "just a minute" for public business.<sup>8</sup> So far as we have learned, personnel agencies have but rarely used this attention-

<sup>8</sup>The standing title of the Detroit Bureau's leaflet series is "Just a Minute."



arresting and illuminating method of interpreting some major move in their programs.

Examination announcements and posters might also be classified as special problem information, but since a special report on examinations and their publicity<sup>9</sup> is being prepared for the Civil Service Assembly, they will not be discussed here.

#### CONCLUSION

In retrospect, the number and variety of publications of one sort or another that have been mentioned in this chapter may convey to the reader the erroneous impression that the Committee advocates the use of all of these reporting media and instruments by *all* agencies, regardless of size. The Committee intends no such unrealistic recommendation. The underlying purpose in the preceding discussion is, rather, to focus attention on individual segments of the whole problem of public reporting and present suggestions for the solution of each in turn. It is improbable that any but the largest of public personnel agencies can essay an "all-out" attack on this many-sided problem. For the average agency, however, limitations of funds and facilities will make it necessary to employ a few weapons of maximum versatility and then concentrate on accurate marksmanship.

<sup>9</sup>See the report of the Committee on Positive Recruitment, a companion report in this series.

## *Chapter VII*

### **Nongovernmental Publications**

THE discussion of the media of public relations has so far been confined to special publications of the personnel agency. It can be seen that the use of the system outlined would cover quite thoroughly the information demands of each of several special publics of the agency. However, by and large, the most numerous public of all is not reached by these special publications. That is the so-called "general public," the man in the street, the voter. It may be assumed that few members of this group will rarely, if ever, have the occasion or patience to read any of the special publications of the agency, no matter how "popularly" they are prepared. The extent of interest of this group in the literature of the agency will most probably be confined to the summaries in the general government handbook and the popular annual report. Yet, in the final analysis, this public is the one on whose fickle support the future of the agency depends. It must be reached. Fortunately, there are well-organized and almost omnipresent means for this purpose—mass publicity media such as the newspapers, radio, and movies. It is on these and minor related media that the agency must rely to reach the minds of its most remote but largest public. How can the public agency use these media to best advantage? In this and the two following chapters, methods whereby these media can be used to best advantage will be described.

#### THE NEWSPAPER—NEWS

The most powerful of the mass information media is still the newspaper, and from the material available it appears that considerable reliance is regularly placed on this by progressive personnel agencies. This applies particularly to announcements

and results of examinations.<sup>1</sup> However, the state personnel agencies in Massachusetts, New York, California, and Michigan, as well as municipal agencies in Cincinnati, Dallas, Bridgeport, Glendale, and a number of other cities, report success in securing newspaper space for general activities and problems of the civil service. The Committee learns that newspaper men "gave a good play" each week for several months to reports released by the Michigan State Civil Service Department, concerning the education, age, sex, salaries, and geographic distribution of state employees.

An investigation of the press relations of personnel agencies in 37 jurisdictions cites the following coverage of selected agencies:<sup>2</sup> the Indiana Bureau of Personnel, 400 papers; the California State Personnel Board, 437 papers and 5 wire services; the Michigan State Civil Service Department, 75 daily papers; the Arkansas State Personnel Division, "complete coverage."

The New York City Civil Service Commission has found it advantageous to organize a regular press release service, supplying both the City News Association and the city desks of the daily press with spot news and special feature items. As a consequence, nine metropolitan dailies each week run a civil service page or column. It is reported that one newspaper receives 1,000 letters a week from its readers with reference to the civil service. Special feature articles have also met with a favorable reception by the press.<sup>3</sup>

Apparently, with proper handling, civil service happenings can compete with other current events in the matter of newsworthiness. If the methods followed by successful jurisdictions were analyzed to discover the types of matter submitted to newspapers and the methods of preparing it for their consumption, the findings would undoubtedly be significant. It would be of special interest to determine whether it is advisable to prepare

<sup>1</sup>Of thirteen clippings which came to the attention of the Committee by chance, ten had to do with examinations and their results, two dealt with the progress of the agency and one with a complaint. Although a small sample, this emphasis may easily be typical.

<sup>2</sup>Richard W. Cooper, *Public Information and the Civil Service Agency*, University of California (1939), p. 114 (unpublished).

<sup>3</sup>Memorandum, Commissioner Wallace Sayre, May 4, 1939.

the material in newspaper style and whether effort should be made to include at least one employee with a journalistic background on the staff of the agency. Of 37 jurisdictions surveyed in a recent study only six made any effort to present news of their activities in acceptable journalistic style, and the expert journalist was conspicuously absent as a regular staff member. This contrasts with recent practice in many agencies of the federal government, where highly skilled and experienced journalists are responsible for handling departmental publicity.

### *Typical News Channels*

It is of prime importance in press relationships that so far as possible reliance be placed on regular channels of news distribution. Normally the news story originating in the agency and appearing in a local paper is picked up by a reporter under special assignment or on a regular beat. He gets the facts by interviewing the persons closest to them and writes his story. The editor determines the space to be given it and the copy desk prepares it for the typesetters by editing and writing the headline.

In the case of a syndicated wire service, the process is essentially the same. Here, the representative of the service handles the fact-gathering and write-up of the story which is then "put on the wire" by the syndicate and sent to each of its subscribers. The editorial staff of each paper receiving the story then determines the space to be allotted to it in that paper, basing judgment on its reader-interest value in the locality. It may be observed that in both processes the only function of the originating agency is to make the news and present the facts to a reporter. No special effort is required beyond a cooperative attitude.

In other types of news distribution, a person in the agency performs some of the functions for which the newspapers would otherwise be responsible. In the press conference, the press agent of the agency will have the facts in hand before the reporters are called. The facts are then recited to them and their questions are answered. The story is then written and enters into the normal channels of local or non-local distribution. The press conference is a thoroughly acceptable method of facilitating the

work of the newspaper and assuring more thorough coverage of the agency's work. However, cautions against its use as a means of tying the reporter's hands through "off the record" statements should be carefully observed.

When the agency adopts the press statement as a means of releasing news, it goes a step further in substituting its own activities for those of the newspaper. Here the agency not only originates the news and gathers the facts, but writes the story in what is fondly hoped to be newspaper style. Such statements, or "handouts," are given to the reporters, who usually proceed to rewrite them if they use them at all. From the newspaper point of view, the handout is less desirable than the conference, since the reporter does not have an opportunity to ask questions. However, press statements are to an increasing degree gaining acceptance as a legitimate aid to reporters in their attempts to keep in touch with a rapidly moving and complex organization.

Farthest removed from normal news channels is the press release—now being used with greater and greater frequency. In form the press release is almost identical with the press statement, but it is distributed directly to editors by mail or messenger. Thus both the reporter and the distributing syndicate are by-passed. Little opportunity is offered for the paper to go to the news source and ask questions or get supporting data. Because of this and other drawbacks, the flow chart for many press releases is from-the-agency-to-the-editor-to-the-wastebasket. Most papers rewrite those press releases which they do use to make them suitable in style and length for their individual needs. It is safe to say that press releases, on the whole, do not find favor with editors; that far too many of them are now distributed by government agencies; and that, for the most part, their content, form and style are not well suited to newspaper standards.

The agency seeking to develop a positive press relations policy should use the press statement and the press release only when circumstances call for them. Press statements may be used to advantage on the following occasions:

1. When an important official wishes to make a formal statement and wants to make sure that his exact words are used. This

includes the issuance to the press of verbatim copies of speeches.

2. When news developments in the agency are so rapid or so complex that the ordinary interview or press conference will not answer the purpose.

3. When accuracy is essential, as with statistical material. In particular, statistics such as number of candidates passed and failed in examinations should be released in this way.

4. When interpreting highly complex technical reports.

5. When presenting feature stories—material which is not spot news but which may have wide interest either as educational or entertainment material.

With rare exceptions, the use of the press release, as compared with the press statement, may be justified only for:

1. Giving general news material, as well as the other types of material previously listed, to newspapers which do not have their own reporters on the spot and which subscribe to a limited wire service or none at all. Generally, only country weeklies and small local dailies will be in this class. These papers will be interested only in material which has some special significance for their own communities.

2. Distributing departmental material—detailed and somewhat technical stories for use in special columns, pages, or sections of the newspaper, such as a question-and-answer column on civil service.

These standards, if followed, would reduce the large percentage of government press releases which now pour over editors' desks and flood their wastebaskets.

### *Proper Use of Press Statements and Releases*

The second major suggestion for the proper use of press statement and press release is that, when such materials are released, they should conform to newspaper standards of content, style, and form. The agency staff member who prepares the releases is taking over the reporter's job, and he should adopt so far as possible the style and method of treatment followed by good newspapermen. There are no set rules for effective newswriting, but certain suggestions may prove helpful.

*Content.* Within the general boundaries of newsworthy material, each agency must determine for itself which incidents and facts should be submitted for publication. Some things are obviously news—the announcement of a civil service examination, the appointment of an eligible to an important post, a general pay cut, and items in similar vein. Other things are just as obviously not news—routine operations and administrative statistics, for example. Between these extremes is a wide range of material which may be made into news or feature stories by proper handling. It is the “nose for news” which is the distinguishing mark of a good reporter—an ability to see the unusual quirk which raises an apparently commonplace happening from the humdrum of routine.

Some guide to the spotting of news is afforded by the general rules taught students of journalism. Thus, “the importance of a story in the eyes of the editor depends on one or more of several considerations—on the property involved; on the number and the prominence of the persons concerned; on the distance of the happening from the place of publication; on the timeliness of the story; on the element of human interest.”<sup>4</sup>

A specific guide to “spotting” items with news value in the work of the public personnel agency may be determined when the previously discussed study on the informational base of the public reporting system is completed. All of the items rated as being of general high-interest value will probably provide subjects for news or feature stories from time to time.

A highly suggestive list of topics as suitable for press stories is the following:<sup>5</sup>

1. Announcement of general and specific examination plans.
  2. Special announcements of local and emergency examinations.
  3. Announcement of names of eligibles, using special releases to papers in each locality to feature the names of residents of that area who were successful in the examination.
  4. Special stories to get candidates for unusual positions.
  5. General statistics and feature stories about public employees.
- These need not be limited to strictly personnel functions, but may

<sup>4</sup>Charles G. Ross, *The Writing of News* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1911), p. 43.

<sup>5</sup>Cooper, *op. cit.*

cover anything having to do with persons in the government service.

6. Stories of savings achieved through improved personnel procedures. These are designed particularly to appeal to taxpayer groups.

7. Stories of new policies or procedures.

8. Stories designed to enlist public cooperation in a special project, such as a wage survey.

A special type of story mentioned by the author is the "human interest" story, dealing not so much with facts as with anecdotes. He suggests that many such stories may be derived from the happenings of public employment.<sup>6</sup>

"Boners" by candidates on examinations; unusual names of applicants; acts of heroism, daring or extraordinary services to the community; hobbies peculiar to it, and a multitude of other unusual situations or activities are to be found in every jurisdiction.

Such incidents may be shaped up as special feature articles that will appeal to the editor of the Sunday magazine or feature section of the newspaper. The breadth of functions which characterizes modern government takes public employees into almost every field of human activity, and while much of their work is routine and uninteresting, the dangerous, the dramatic, the novel, and the significant are there as well. Many government jobs are unique in themselves and make excellent feature material. Others, such as police work, the coast guard, or the courts, involve high human drama. Sometimes individual employees may be found to have especially interesting backgrounds. The research activities going on within government circles can compete with any "House of Magic" in discoveries significant to human welfare. All such stories are meat to the newspaper editor. Where an abstract discussion of the great "benefits" to be obtained from the merit system may leave him cold, the human interest story will get an immediate response. A thorough exploitation of the "human interest" to be found in the far-flung activities of government will pay dividends not only in terms of immediate attention in the press, but also in terms of building up the prestige of government employment and of government employees. Only in rare cases has any serious attempt been made

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.



to capitalize on the possibilities for publicity in this type of material.

Thus the wide-awake personnel officer need not suffer from a dearth of news material. He might wisely take to heart the moral of that once famous lecture, "Acres of Diamonds," which demonstrated in most convincing fashion that the gems of opportunity for which we are wont to search in obscure places are usually to be discovered lying in profusion at our feet.

*Style.* Having decided what to write about, the person who tries to fill the role of reporter for his agency's activities must constantly bear in mind the newspaperman's objectives. Newspapers are products of a few hours. Finished writing is not expected. Fine writing is definitely discouraged. But certain elements of style must be observed in any story before it is fit to be published. These elements as described by Ross<sup>7</sup> and others include:

1. The writing must be clear. Short, simple sentence structure with emphasis on Anglo-Saxon words is desirable. Technical terms should be avoided.

2. The story must be told concisely. This means elimination of every unnecessary word, phrase, or sentence. Each word should add something to the story. Ordinary stories should seldom run over 200 words.

3. The story must be told forcefully. Force springs from simplicity and conciseness. Active sentences ("Jones succeeds Smith") are more forceful than passive ("Smith is succeeded by Jones").

4. The story must be told fairly and impartially. This is particularly important for government writers. Government releases too often display the prejudices of the writer and are loaded with "color" adjectives which tell the writer's opinion of the action as well as describing it.

5. The story must be written in good taste. Care must be taken not to offend any person or group.

6. The story must have originality. Trite phrases and monotonous sentence structure must be avoided.

<sup>7</sup>Ross, *op. cit.*

7. The story must be absolutely accurate in its general facts as well as in such details as names, addresses, and other items where inaccuracies might justifiably give offense.

8. Standard rules of grammar, spelling, and punctuation must be observed. However, every newspaper has its own set of rules for capitalization, use of proper names, and spelling. If the release is written for a specific paper, these should be carefully followed.

News stories start with a lead paragraph, which, ideally, tells the essential facts so that the busy reader may learn what happened without reading further. If possible, it is desirable to get into the lead the names of the important persons involved. Succeeding paragraphs fill in the details of the picture in descending order of importance. It should be possible to cut off a well-written news story at the end of any paragraph and still retain the effect of completeness. This is an important feature, because the story may have to be shortened to fit available space, and dropping the last paragraphs is the easiest means of doing this. These restrictions, of course, do not apply to feature articles or human interest stories, where the story is an integrated unit.

*Form.* The form of the press release should follow a few simple rules to meet the standards newspapers set for their copy. These rules are widely neglected in present government press releases.<sup>8</sup>

1. Stories should be typed or mimeographed doublespaced on one side of 8½ x 11" paper.

2. Sheets of a story should be clipped together, not stapled.

3. The source of the story, including the address and telephone number of the releasing agency, should be clearly marked in the upper lefthand corner of the first page, and a brief identification should be in the upper left corner of succeeding pages. All pages should be numbered.

4. The story should begin about the middle of the first page, the space at the top being left for writing headlines.

5. A margin of 1 to 1½ inches should be left on each side and an inch or more at the top and bottom of each page.

<sup>8</sup>These suggestions are largely drawn from Ross, *op. cit.* pp. 4, 6.

6. Dividing words at the end of a line should be avoided. Words should never be divided from one page to another.

7. Paragraph indentations should be about one-third the width of the page.

8. The end of a story should be clearly marked.

9. Serial numbers should not be placed on releases.

10. The date and time for release of a story should be indicated on the first page.

11. Stories sent to different papers in the same area should be written differently, if possible, and that fact indicated on the copy.

12. Tabular material should be included only rarely. Most papers will have neither the inclination nor the facilities to put such material into print.

13. Releases should be distributed by first-class mail in plain envelopes.

Alternatives to the regular mimeographed or typewritten press release can be used in some cases. The first is the "clip sheet" which is a collection of short items printed in regular newspaper type either on a large sheet or in a column-length book. These are useful as "filler" items and as material for departmental columns. Since they are already printed, the editor can see at a glance just how much space they will take and can thus select an item of proper length to fill an open space in his page. The clip sheet is not recommended for regular news or feature releases.

Material may also be distributed in the form of mats. These are papier-mâché sheets which have been cast over material previously set in type. Type metal poured into the mat is ready for printing as soon as it sets. Such material is termed "boilerplate" in the newspaper profession. Among most editors of daily papers the term is one of opprobrium. Its usefulness is limited to sketches, charts, and photographs for departmental pages in dailies and to news and feature stories for the smaller weeklies which find mat material an inexpensive way of filling up inside pages. Since mats are relatively expensive and have such limited usefulness, the press agent will ordinarily ignore them.

*Distribution of news stories<sup>9</sup>*

Distribution of news stories, of course, varies with the size of the jurisdiction involved. In small or medium sized cities, press releases often can be delivered personally to newspaper editors and even to various specialized publications. In larger cities, however, and in the state services, it becomes necessary to set up a mailing list carefully designed to cover all newspaper and as many other publications as will be useful in the dissemination of publicity.

Some agencies rely upon city news bureaus or other press services, such as the Associated Press or the United Press wire services, to carry their stories throughout the metropolitan area or the state. This plan may work out well in certain instances, but probably on the average it is much less effective than the establishment of mailing lists designed to reach at least the leading newspapers in every city or town concerned.<sup>10</sup> Use of the wire services saves money because all that is necessary is half a dozen carbon copies of the stories, whereas in a large state the use of a mailing list may necessitate five hundred mimeographed copies of a story and an envelope with the proper postage for each. On the other hand, the office of a news service located in the state capital is on the lookout for "spot" news of some importance and more often than not such news will crowd the general news story submitted by the personnel agency off the wires, and so the entire story may go no farther than the wastebasket in the news bureau office. The wire services should, of course, be included on the general mailing list so that if any story of unusual significance is released, it can be picked up by the service. If such a story is put upon the press association wire, it ordinarily will be given a better "play" by newspapers.

Now let us consider the types of mailing lists which can be established. First, there is the general newspaper list to which all newspaper releases will be regularly sent. This should include stories concerning pending examinations and general news stories on the activities of the agency or of the governmental jurisdiction involved. In a city this list should include every newspaper, and in a state it should include the more important newspapers in cities and towns of any consequence. The minimum population level of towns to be reached should be approximately one or two thousand. Perhaps a

<sup>9</sup>This section is taken verbatim from Cooper, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-47, by permission of the author.

<sup>10</sup>Cooper's recommendation here conflicts to some extent with that of the committee. It is submitted that the wire services have perfected their machinery to the point where special mailing lists often will be unnecessary. Where such is not the case, however, mailing lists should be used.

better basis, however, is to place the limit on the circulation of the paper; thus every newspaper of more than one thousand circulation might be included, and in fair sized towns where no newspaper has reached this circulation, the largest newspaper.

In state jurisdictions, the general list can be filed by counties or by regions so that in cases of specific localized examinations the particular county or region could be readily reached with special stories. The list might further be broken down into city as against country papers, and a further segregation made between daily and weekly newspapers.

In addition to the general list within the jurisdiction, a mailing list of newspapers covering a larger area may be useful for examinations on which residence requirements must be waived.

Supplementing the general mailing list of newspapers, and for the purpose of giving publicity to individual examinations, there can be specialized mailing lists of periodicals, professional journals and other publications which reach various types of occupational groups, educational institutions and publications, or other areas of the population which may not be satisfactorily ferreted out by the newspaper story. For example, some of the lists which should be set up are: the state medical journals, the publications of the bar association, the national professional publication of veterinarians, labor newspapers and other publications of central labor councils or of individual unions (giving equal attention to all rival labor organizations) and other trade and professional publications. In the skilled trades, labor publications may be especially helpful, as they usually are willing to cooperate by publishing in full announcements of pending examinations in their own fields.

In the agricultural field also there are a number of publications, including farm bureau monthlies, country newspapers and various trade journals, such as those put out by poultry growers' associations, almond growers' associations, etc. These may be useful in obtaining agricultural employees for state institutions or, on a higher level, experts and technicians for . . . the agricultural department.

Educational institutions provide a source which often is not sufficiently exploited by personnel agencies. The high schools and the evening high schools as a source for clerical or semi-clerical occupations, the college or university as a source not only for some of the clerical levels but for nearly all of the technical fields at the entrance of "trainee" level, and the business college as a source of stenographers, typists, operators of office devices, etc.—all can be reached through various types of news releases adapted to the particular type of institution.

Release dates are not important for the average story mailed out by a personnel agency. However, it is advisable to establish release dates for all stories and to time their mailing so that the most distant newspaper will receive every article at least one day before the selected date. Newspapers will honor release dates and the device itself may avoid any ill will as a result of one newspaper's receiving and publishing items before others receive the copy. It is also wise to mail stories so that they will be received by the average country weekly in sufficient time to be published during the current week. Thus, if it is found that most country weeklies in the region are issued on Wednesday, the release date should be set for Wednesday and the story mailed on the previous Friday or Saturday so that it will be in the hands of editors by Monday. This procedure has the additional advantage of making material available to newspapers fairly early in the week, when they are less crowded. Incidentally, on the average metropolitan daily Monday is a light day and it may be found advantageous to release stories to such newspapers so that they can be published on that day.

The mailing list can most easily be compiled from the current edition of N. W. Ayer and Sons newspaper directory.<sup>11</sup> This directory is published annually and may be obtained in any large library. It carries fairly complete information concerning every newspaper in the United States, listed by cities in state groupings. It includes the day or days of publication, whether morning or evening, the circulation, political affiliation, population of the city, name of the editor and managing editor, and other similar information. Practically every type of periodical, including trade, professional, labor, and other similar publications, as well as newspapers, is listed, so that under ordinary circumstances both general and specialized mailing lists for any jurisdiction can be compiled with its aid.

Large agencies will find the use of addressograph plates makes for long-run economy in mailing lists. The plates can be filed by each major classification, and the whole group run off quickly when a release is to go to all papers on the list. The plates

<sup>11</sup>N. W. Ayer and Sons, *Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals*, Philadelphia.

should be checked each year against the new directory to discover discontinuances, additions, and changes in status of the various publications.

*Follow-Up Methods for Newspapers*

One can learn the efficiency of an automobile motor and the quality of gasoline by checking miles traveled against gallons of gasoline consumed. Just so the success of a newspaper publicity program can be measured by the number of releases printed in any given newspaper, the number of papers which use the releases, the space given them, and the number of applicants produced by recruiting publicity. To do this, it is essential that all newspapers be checked through a clipping service.

By keeping a record of the day each release is printed, and by checking that date against the dates of distribution and release, the publicity representative may discover that he should readjust his mailing and release dates so that they will conform more closely to the needs of the newspapers. A note should be made of papers using none of the releases, and some type of special contact should be employed to interest the editors of those papers in the problems of the personnel agency. As the clippings are received they should be checked for attitudes, as indicated by headlines used, type of treatment and accompanying editorial comment, as well as for errors in printing, which if serious should be pointed out to the editor by personal letter.

The attitudes of newspaper editors and publishers toward the personnel agency and its activities, and the means which may be employed to improve such attitudes, should likewise be constantly watched. It will usually be found that the average newspaper is neutral. Most newspapers will print news and feature stories if they are interesting, will give them factual rather than editorialized headlines, and will take no editorial notice of them. Some newspapers may have the tendency to play down or disparage releases, while others will play them up and give them more than average space. One objective of the publicity representative is to increase the number of newspapers using the releases as well as the number of releases used by each news-

paper. As has been pointed out, one of the most effective means of doing this is to prepare interesting stories. If the releases are worth printing, direct contact with newspaper editors is of value in expanding their use. Such contact may be made in a number of ways. The most useful may be personal visits to the managing editors or news editors to obtain their good will and to interest them in the work of the agency.

In lieu of personal contacts, direct correspondence is of great aid in reaching the newspaper editor. Editors are human beings and as such susceptible to expressions of appreciation. If, for example, it is found that a number of candidates for examinations apply because of stories carried in a particular newspaper, a carefully written letter to the editor, thanking him for his cooperation and pointing out the value of his services to the community, will be deserved. Not only is it deserved but, if sent, it will probably be printed, perhaps in the letters-to-the-editor column; or if news is slack, it may appear in a box on the front page, thus adding an additional item to the agency's publicity. Letters of this sort have been employed by the California State Personnel Board both for emergency and regionalized examinations and in connection with general examination publicity. In each instance they have been accorded favorable editorial mention. Such votes of thanks for cooperation, of course, must not be used too frequently lest they lose their effectiveness. Further, the sending of a form letter to all the newspapers in a given community is not advisable.

#### THE NEWSPAPER—ADVERTISEMENTS

In the public relations programs of private concerns, paid advertising is the big brother in the family of publicity media. In the government sphere it is at best a neglected member of the family. Private firms invest impressive amounts of money on far-flung campaigns to make the names of their products loom larger in the public eye than those of their competitors. They utilize every known device to attract attention. Governments, too, spend considerable amounts on advertising—mainly to meet legal requirements. But their advertisements seem specially designed to discourage attention.



The question arises as to just how far governments should go in the direction private advertisers have taken. Because it is public business, governmental activity can and does get a considerable amount of unpaid publicity. It is obvious that, except for a few cases such as tourist publicity, utility promotion, etc., government cannot and should not go to the extremes of display advertising in which private firms indulge. It should be equally obvious that when government does have occasion to advertise it should do so as effectively as the dictates of the budget and good taste allow. If one does advertise there is no excuse for not doing it well.

### *Legal Notices*

At this point a clear distinction should be drawn between public advertisements and legal announcements. The fact that John Doe's automobile is to be sold on the courthouse steps for nonpayment of debt must be made public for legal reasons, and it is fitting that the customary legal statement in six-point type in the classified section of the paper should carry the message. However, when the public agency seeks to dispose of land it owns, or to attract applicants for a civil service examination or renters for its housing project, its objectives are the same as those of the private firm which is trying to sell soap or gasoline. And its methods should be similar. In such instances, government can and should use every fair technique of modern advertising. Attractive copy and layout, proper choice of media, careful attention to the location of the advertisement—all these are essentials to good advertising. The technical aspects of modern advertising are set forth in any good elementary book on the subject. Their skillful application is an art and a science. "How to do it" is beyond the scope of this report. The important thing is that it should be done.

Unless the standard legal announcement is required by law, it should be abandoned.<sup>12</sup> Again, the practice of offering public advertising to the lowest bidder should be discarded, if at all possible. The least schooled of private advertisers pick their

<sup>12</sup>In his survey Cooper found such requirements in 16 out of 37 jurisdictions, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

media as a matter of course on the basis of *lowest cost per effective reader*, an effective reader being one of the type to which the message is addressed. Public advertisers should follow this lead.

Civil service agencies will generally use advertising only to announce forthcoming examinations and attract applicants to them. Properly used, there is no better medium for positive recruiting than a newspaper ad. A simple ad in the "Help Wanted" columns has proved most effective for the few agencies which have tried this device, as demonstrated by the experience of the Detroit Civil Service Commission. The Arkansas State Personnel Division received 167 inquiries from a single small display advertisement, which, incidentally, was run without charge by 13 newspapers. The advertisement appears in Figure 3.

**DO YOU KNOW** that examinations are being held for 100 positions in the Arkansas State Employment Service, October 8 and 9?

<i>Position</i>	<i>Starting Salary</i>
Director . . . . .	\$3,600
Field Supervisor . . . . .	2,400
Statistical Supervisor . . . . .	2,400
Fiscal Supervisor . . . . .	2,400
Manager . . . . .	2,000
Senior Interviewer . . . . .	1,620
Junior Interviewer . . . . .	1,260

-----MAIL THIS COUPON IMMEDIATELY TO-----

Kenneth O. Warner, Special Representative,  
United States Employment Service,  
Capitol Building,  
Little Rock, Arkansas

Please send me application for examination for Employment Service positions.

Name.....

City.....State.....

(One year's residence in Arkansas requisite for examination)

FIGURE 3. DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENT USED FOR RECRUITMENT PURPOSES BY THE ARKANSAS STATE PERSONNEL DIVISION. (*Arkansas Gazette*, September 14, 1937.)

As an employer the government is but one of many competitors in the local employment market. If it wishes to hold its own, it must use every device that will bring the desired results. Advertising has proved to be such a device. In a large agency which finds it advisable to spend any considerable sum on advertising, the employment of expert assistance is warranted. Some years ago the New York City Civil Service Commission employed an experienced advertising man to review the haphazard system then in use and develop an up-to-date program for publicizing its examinations. According to Commissioner Wallace Sayre, this resulted in a decrease in advertising costs from \$21,000 in 1913 to \$9,000 in 1914. The returns were satisfactory despite a 50 per cent increase in the number of examinations. The advertising expert analyzed circulation figures and the clienteles of newspapers and magazines. In this way, the advertising media used were more closely coordinated with the types of examinations and applicants desired.

#### PERIODICALS

Information about government activities may also be published to advantage in periodicals other than newspapers. These may be weeklies, monthlies or quarterlies, distributed locally, regionally, or nationally. They may be designed for the general reader or for special interest groups.

The information presented in such publications must be carefully prepared in style and content for the groups and areas covered. For example, a local personnel agency should confine itself to general articles in local magazines, such as the Chamber of Commerce monthly, house organs of leading local industries, and the like. Only rarely should it attempt anything for national publications of general distribution. On the other hand, a national agency would reverse this emphasis. Particularly fruitful for periodical articles on personnel are the publications of government employee groups. Articles in professional or trade journals are an excellent aid in recruiting for special positions.

Most periodicals, and particularly local organs, are engaged in a constant search for interesting material with which to fill

their pages. A well-written article which touches the interests of the readers of a particular publication will stand a good chance of being published, especially when the writer has made an effort to cater to the characteristic interests of those who read the particular publication. Thus articles on the savings resulting from improved personnel practices are well adapted to publications of taxpayers' associations. Discussions of other aspects of personnel work will find a place in periodicals designed for labor union men, racial minorities, and various special interest groups. Employee publications will be interested in articles on classification, leave regulations, and other subjects affecting the employees as a whole. These publications might also carry examination announcements and a regular column on civil service. Such articles will generally be written by members of the periodical's staff or by free-lance writers. In such cases the function of the agency will be to suggest ideas and to make information available to the writer.

Occasionally, a member of the staff of the agency may prepare an article for publication in a periodical. Of course, this will occur more frequently in the case of technical articles than when popular material is involved. When such a homemade product is attempted, the writer should always keep the reader's viewpoint in mind. Being close to his work, the writer may have a tendency to slur over points which are elementary to him but not at all clear to someone outside the organization. All the suggestions as to simplicity, forcefulness, and originality of style, and interest and accuracy of content made in connection with the discussion of news writing should be followed for periodical material. In popular articles, technical terminology should be avoided and examples and illustrations with human interest value liberally used. Articles should follow the suggestions for spacing and form given for newspaper copy.

Apparently the potentialities of periodical articles have been largely ignored by personnel agencies, except for recruiting purposes. In an analysis of the publicity of 37 agencies, which has already been cited, Cooper lists the following instances of periodical publication:

Santa Monica prepares material for an employees' monthly periodical, San Diego prepares three or four articles of general interest a year for local periodicals, and Baltimore, Detroit, Glendale, Phoenix, Bridgeport, and New Jersey all have had articles published at one time or another. Los Angeles County announces examinations in medical and employee publications, Indiana releases articles through the State Department of Public Welfare's *Welfare News*, and the *Indiana Unemployment and Compensation Advisor*. California apparently does the most in this field, supplying at least one article of general information to the state employees' magazine each month, together with examination announcements and a question and answer column on civil service. In addition, articles are prepared for use in taxpayers' or other periodicals. Michigan also makes some use of this type of publicity.

In a well-planned program of public relations, attention will be given to magazines and periodicals as outlets for information concerning personnel. Certain publications, of course, will open their pages only occasionally for material of the sort. Even so, it will be well not to leave the matter to chance, but rather to develop a definite program and policy looking toward the systematic exploitation of all available outlets.

## *Chapter VIII*

### **Radio as a Medium**

**R**ADIO has now joined the press as one of the two most significant media for reaching large numbers of people. Reliable figures indicate that in 1938 there were 33,000,000 radios in the United States, owned by 27,000,000 families, giving radio a potential audience of approximately 90,000,000 persons. The Columbia Broadcasting System has reported through the Starch surveys that 76.4 per cent of these sets are in operation daily.

Almost 700 stations serve these potential listeners. Most of the stations are commercial; some are owned by educational institutions; a few by fraternal and religious orders; a very limited number by states and municipalities. All are licensed "to serve public interest, convenience, and necessity." Some of the stations operate on a part-time schedule of a few hours a week while others operate 18 to 24 hours a day. Approximately half the stations are members of a network, which means that some of their programs are supplied by means of a telephone line connecting two or more stations. The average full-time station will broadcast between 300 and 350 programs a week. It is into this structure that government must fit its program.

What have government agencies, and personnel agencies in particular, done with this powerful medium for reaching the mind of the almost unreachable man-in-the-street? The first fact that must be recorded is that the use of the radio by government is increasing, encouraged both by officials and by the stations themselves.

Almost every radio listener has tuned in on a program explaining the work of his government. This applies not only to the larger branches of our federal, state, and local governments,

but to their administrative subdivisions as well. The State, Interior, and Agriculture Departments of the federal government make frequent use of radio facilities. So does the legislative branch. The administrative divisions of state governments, such as public health bureaus, employment security agencies, and departments of education, also have radio programs. It is not uncommon for stations to have "lines" to the city hall or state capitol so that broadcasts can be made directly from the spot. Some departments always send their press releases to radio stations; in some cases the station assigns a news or special events man or educational director to cover certain divisions of government. A number of stations have arrangements with police and fire departments so that when something unusual occurs they will be able to cover it as a news item or by shortwave broadcast from the scene. All of these things indicate something of radio's interest in government reporting. The station's personnel thus becomes one of the publics with which government has to do in its publicity policies.

Radio stations broadcast material from governmental sources because the public has repeatedly shown its interest in educational programs—particularly those that are timely and significant. The stations are also interested because they are licensed "to serve public interest, convenience, and necessity" and broadcasting programs on civic and public affairs is presumably a prerequisite to their license renewal. Whether the motivation is public-spirited service or selfish interest, the fact remains that station executives will normally take real interest in government programs.

#### USE OF THE RADIO BY PERSONNEL AGENCIES

The use of radio by civil service agencies apparently has begun in a serious way in only a few jurisdictions.<sup>1</sup> The New York City Civil Service Commission is outstanding with its one or two weekly programs on examinations and civil service in general over the municipal station. In 1937, the California State Personnel Board conducted a series of regular weekly broadcasts

<sup>1</sup>Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

of the general information type. At various times, the Michigan State Civil Service Department has presented interviews by its executive officer and principal staff members. Other personnel agencies which have been represented on the air by infrequent talks include those in Cincinnati, Oakland, San Diego, Youngstown, Grand Rapids, Los Angeles City Schools, and the State of Illinois. The executive officer of the New Jersey State Civil Service Commission has spoken on statewide and nationwide broadcasts. In nearly all instances the talks were written within the personnel agency.

Examination announcements also are beginning to be heard on the air. Brief remarks concerning pending civil service examinations have been broadcast in Dallas, Phoenix, and Bridgeport, and in the states of Arkansas, Michigan, and Oklahoma. Such examination announcements were made a regular part of the broadcasts put on by the California State Personnel Board. In Wisconsin, the State Bureau of Personnel has recently entered the field with a series of programs designed to increase the prestige of the public service. This series was jointly sponsored by the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, and the Wisconsin Junior Chamber of Commerce.

On the whole, however, personnel agencies have not generally taken advantage of the potentialities of the radio. Cooper has outlined the types of subject matter which can be effectively presented by this medium. The following paragraphs are quoted from this source.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Type of Subject Matter*

The educational program sponsored by a public personnel agency can touch upon almost any phase of the government's operations. For example, the California State Personnel Board presented a series of broadcasts during the spring and summer of 1937 under the heading of "Know Your State Government." Each week the work of a different department or bureau was discussed in terms both understandable and interesting to the layman. The subjects included the state printing plant, the state highway patrol, the veterinary meat inspection service, the state personnel agency and others. Subject

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 61-64.



matter differed, in that the history of one agency might be the center of attention, while in another agency the protection of the public or the conservation of a natural resource was considered more important and made the "theme" of the program. Results of operations, type of employment offered, multiplicity of activities all were taken up in the various types of discussions.

Another type of subject matter is particularly important for this type of program—jobs. Often an entire program can profitably be devoted to one job. Some positions lend themselves to this because they are unique. The position of lion hunter is unusual in a state service: people like to listen to discussions of such out-of-the-ordinary occupations, and a 15-minute period might well be used in indicating why this position exists, how the incumbent works, some of the hazards encountered, and so forth. Police and law enforcement work of all kinds has a dramatic appeal, and always is good for interest if the drama is brought out. This is notably attested to by the several series of commercially sponsored radio programs dramatizing events in law enforcement agencies which have been on the air for several years. Notable among these in the West is the Rio Grande Oil Company program centering around the work of the Los Angeles sheriff's office.<sup>3</sup>

Investigations of business corruption as carried on by the county or city prosecutors and outside of the government by the better business bureaus also are of interest.

But the spectacular is not the only means of appeal. People are interested in many types of occupations, and the variety of public positions in such fields as art, music, history, science, medicine, law, and research should not be overlooked.

Personalities as well as jobs can be made the center of programs. Nearly every jurisdiction has in its employ individuals who have made notable records or have notable achievements to their credit. Prize winning chemists, experts in agriculture, men who have devoted their lives to some knotty problem, may be included. Even the employee who has done no more than serve his city for forty years may be of interest on the program. Individuals whose hobbies are unusual or who achieved some distinction for their "extra-curricular" work may be called upon to appear.

Governmental officials always are a ready drawing card, although it must be borne in mind that the presentation of a political office holder by the personnel agency in other than a neutral light may create a distrust of the agency.

<sup>3</sup>The Los Angeles County Employees Association has followed such a policy for a number of years.—*Ed.*

The work of the personnel agency lends itself to some publicizing on the air. The start of the merit system, details of the work of the personnel agency, discussions of how civil service tests are constructed, how they are rated, how eligible lists are used, how salaries are set, and other such material is worth exposition and permits the agency to carry out its public reporting function on one more front.<sup>4</sup> An over-all picture of the state service also is a suitable subject. In this connection, the work of the League of Women Voters, the bureaus of municipal research, the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce, and other cooperating civic groups can be brought into the picture.

Entertainment also can be brought into the programs in the form of performance by singers, musicians, actors and others from the ranks of state or city employees. Book reviews by the city librarian or some other employee who is a competent critic are useful.

The principal difficulty with such programs is the time and energy spent in developing them. Probably the personnel agency should offer the opportunity for the last named type of program and rely upon the employees' union or club to develop them. Care should be taken to make sure the entertainment is worthy of presentation, for strong competition for attention is provided by the highest paid entertainers in the world, always available with a turn of the listener's radio dial.

As indicated in the foregoing quoted discussion of subject matter, the personnel agency should use the radio, but if it is to do so effectively some understanding must be gained of the nature and techniques of radio broadcasting. What functions can radio perform, particularly those not covered by other forms of governmental reporting? What kinds of programs are possible? What preliminary considerations are involved in getting a series of programs started? What are the essential points to be kept in mind in preparing material for presentation on a radio program? What methods have been devised for evaluating the programs and determining whether they achieve the desired objectives? These are a few of the questions that will be considered in this chapter.

<sup>4</sup>The New York City Civil Service Commission, which has access to the city's own broadcasting station, includes questions and answers about civil service on some of its programs, as well as announcements of civil service examinations. The United States Civil Service Commission does not conduct its own radio program, but members of the Commission or the staff appear occasionally on local programs sponsored by employee unions or other organizations.

WHAT CAN RADIO DO AND WHOM CAN IT REACH?

Radio programs are immediate and personal. From a public service point of view they can make significant information seem more vital. They substitute for the impersonal characteristics of the printed page the potential personal attractiveness of the human voice. While the platform and personal interview do this too, radio may reach a much larger audience and, as compared with the talking picture, the expense is relatively insignificant. The power to make its subject matter vital is at once one of radio's greatest assets and most dangerous liabilities. Insignificant information may be made to sound important, and thus in the hands of someone not conscious of his responsibility, radio runs the danger of becoming commonplace. If, then, government is to use radio effectively it must respect radio's possibilities and best accomplishments and not measure each offering on the basis that "it is as good as some other things I have heard." The fact that it is immediate, as well as personal, only strengthens its possibilities.

From an educational point of view, radio is more than an instrument for transmitting information. It can also be a stimulator, an effective device for the development of attitudes. Because the typical radio program is essentially tabloid in character, the best educational programs aim to stimulate an interest and so influence the individual to discuss and investigate for himself. It is important to bear this in mind and not to attempt to use radio solely as a medium of information.

Probably radio's greatest asset is that it can bring the event itself to listeners, and do so *immediately*. In this it is unique among all other public relations media. When the event is visual rather than auditory it may be described. When neither is completely satisfactory, radio can use the documentary program in which real people in their own environment describe what they are doing, while announcers with prepared scripts bridge the gaps so that the story is unified and complete.

To summarize, then, radio can (1) transmit information; (2) through the power of the human voice it can vitalize that in-

formation; (3) educationally it can stimulate listeners to learn for themselves; and (4) beyond all other media it can bring the event to the listener immediately.

Who can be reached by radio? is an exceptionally complicated question. The fact that 82 per cent of American families own radio sets does not indicate that they are listening, or that this figure applies uniformly in different sections of the country. There are so many conditioning factors that it is difficult to answer the question and this despite the fact that commercial broadcasters know a great deal about the radio audience through their surveys.

The question of who is listening within the given area depends on such factors as the season of the year, time of day, number of stations serving the given area, reputation for good programs, amount of audience preparation, frequency of broadcast, competing attractions, and the like. There has been some indication that low-income groups listen more than high-income groups, urban listeners more than rural listeners, women more than men. The late afternoon is found to be most suitable for reaching children, noon and early evening for the farm audience, morning and afternoon for women listeners, and between 7:00 and 10:00 P.M. for family groups.

Perhaps the answer to the question of who can be reached within a generally defined service area depends more on audience preparation than any other single factor. This means that the desired audience has been fairly clearly defined before work on the program begins. Material and personnel should be selected with the special audience in mind. Posters, radio announcements, footnotes on department stationery, even newspaper advertising might be used to notify those interested when the projected program is available. Most educational broadcasters seem agreed that almost as much time and effort and money are to be spent in preparing audiences as in preparing the program! Otherwise it will reach only those who happen to be listening and may entirely miss those for whom the program is primarily intended.

To the personnel agency this means that members of the audi-

ence to which its program is directed will at times be candidates for employment and at other times the rank and file of the citizenry. When the program is directed to the former its primary appeal will be to a selected age-level and a certain economic or social stratum of the population, with only a secondary appeal to others who happen to be listening. When the purpose is to vitalize significant information or move listeners to take a greater interest in the work of the department, the primary appeal will be to a more general audience. In either case there will be more interested listeners if some program promotion has preceded the broadcast.

### *Program Preparation*

Assuming that the personnel agency is interested in radio, the question arises as to how it should go about utilizing it to best advantage. Commercial radio programs have generally been successful because program preparation has been in the hands of persons who not only specialize in the medium, but who also have the time and the financial means to do a thorough job. Because the advertiser is paying a great deal for time and talent, he demands results. Thus those engaged in commercial radio not only work under pressure but they are also given sufficient financial assistance to assure reasonable success.

Public service broadcasting, on the other hand, is not infrequently in the hands of officials who are not radio specialists but are called upon to do full-time work in addition to handling radio broadcasts. Beyond that they may lack funds both for promoting the program and for carrying it out. Under these circumstances, superiors can hardly expect worth-while results. Even station managers may be tolerant of mediocre efforts—perhaps considerably more so than listeners. Here and there, however, it is increasingly recognized by those engaged in educational work that effective public service broadcasting means as careful planning and financing as are involved in handling commercial programs.

At the outset it may be pointed out that if the agency is to take the radio seriously, it should endeavor to obtain advice and

assistance from someone who has a general knowledge of the medium, and, preferably, some special training and experience in its use. Of the steps to be taken by the radio specialist in the development of his sector of the public relations program, the following are essential: (1) contact with stations; (2) organization of policy or program committees; (3) determination of program and series length, frequency, and location on the schedule; (4) determination of form of program and personnel required; (5) preparation of the script and production of the program; (6) audience preparation and program follow-up; and (7) evaluation.

The first step in planning for radio is the formation of a "Radio Committee." It should decide such things as the relationship of the personnel agency to radio, use of announcements rather than programs, types of material to be used, and allocation of responsibility. At the outset the committee should be exclusively a committee of the agency. Later it should be broadened to include a representative from the radio station and two or three typical listeners. The committee should not only pass on the programs and their purpose but also on the outlets, the personnel, the audience to be appealed to, as well as the length, frequency, and duration of a series of broadcasts. Members of the committee should sit in on the auditions and meet occasionally to appraise the results, modify the original plan, and the like. The public relations official should be made responsible for executing the policy agreed upon. This will involve making contacts with the stations and their staffs, selecting and rehearsing the participants, and related matters.

With stations providing their time without charge as part of their service to the public, the governmental agency should be as careful in cultivating the friendship of the radio as of the press. The persons to contact in the station are the president, general-manager, program-directors, and news-editor or educational director. Radio officials, like newspaper editors, have immense power in editorial selection. As a rule it is wise to study the relationships of local stations to local papers in an effort to see how cooperative they are. Sometimes newspapers refuse press

releases that have been given to radio stations unless the release date has been agreed upon, and this in such a way that the paper is on the street when the station is making its announcement or launches its program. Conversely, radio stations like to be considered alongside the press in the release of any material. Newsworthy items may be included on a general news program. When they are broader than ordinary news items, they may be given a separate spot on the schedule.

The factors that make for more cordial relations between the radio station and the public agency are: (1) an understanding by each of the other's purposes and methods of operation; (2) a reasonable attitude on the part of the agency in requesting time, and a willingness to give up a prearranged time for something of special interest; (3) a realization by the agency of the amount of time involved in preparing an effective broadcast, leading it to curtail its requests for time beyond the minimum length for effective presentation; (4) an understanding of station policy and cooperation in such things as submitting script, arranging for rehearsals, and kindred details; (5) an avoidance of controversial issues unless all points of view are fairly represented or the station is warned in advance.

Frequently the agency, as a non-paying user of radio time, will have to be content with taking whatever it can get in the way of outlets and "spots" on the air. Where a choice is offered, however, several elements should be considered. The choice of outlets is a primary consideration. Broadcasts are released in five main ways: through direct broadcasts from one station; through regular regional networks made up of a few stations in contiguous areas; through national networks; through special networks—stations joined together for a particular program or series; and through recordings distributed to local stations. The choice of outlets is, of course, dictated by the area and audience to be reached. In general, the local personnel agency will rely on its home-town stations. State coverage is difficult except in such states as California and Michigan, where regular regional networks operate. The state personnel agency can perhaps best rely on recorded programs, distributed to local stations within its

jurisdiction. National networks will, of course, be used only by national agencies or associations. It may be suggested here that some of the national civil service associations might well sponsor a network series on public service similar to the "Americans at Work" program broadcast by the Columbia Broadcasting System.

### *Types of Programs*

Programs may be classified by types as follows: (1) announcements and short news items; (2) special events and other programs not in series form; (3) the series.

A series of broadcasts, "same time, same station," will normally tend to develop an audience and give correspondingly greater results than a single broadcast or even several broadcasts coming at irregular intervals. Thus, it may be advisable for such a radio advisory committee as suggested earlier in this chapter to concentrate on the series, although it might contribute worth-while suggestions on at least the general policy concerning the first two types mentioned.

Program length depends on the nature of the material and amount of time available. The most frequent unit is 15 minutes, though 30-minute programs are common. One-minute and five-minute programs are also common for civic groups. The 15-minute program requires 6 to 8 pages of typewritten, double-spaced script, and the 30-minute presentation requires 14 to 20 pages. Unless the agency has a highly experienced staff with sufficient time and money available, the shorter unit is recommended.

Location on the schedule depends on the audience to be reached and necessarily on the time available at the station.<sup>5</sup> To precede or follow a popular program is generally a help. Normally, time from seven to ten o'clock in the evening is considered the best, but this may not be true in handling a public service program, for one meets greater competition from other stations and the audience expects a more finished program in the evening hours. If the program is likely to appeal to a com-

<sup>5</sup> Either the local station or some of the printed material on audiences will help in this connection.



paratively small audience, the station manager may also feel that he cannot donate time during this period. One should try to avoid replacing a popular feature and if the personnel agency is working with a network station, it should seek assurance that the station will not shift the time allotted to it to another feature of less than transcendent importance.

The question of how long the series should last depends upon the success of the program. In almost any event, however, it should be planned for a definite number of weeks. It is always possible to cancel in case the programs are not getting the desired response. The fact that the series is fully planned as to subject matter will tend to add to its attractiveness and enhance its value. The government representative should remember that radio, like a newspaper, has a classified section (announcements), an inside page for smaller audiences, and a front page for general interests. Program length, location, frequency, and duration will be decided according to about the same criteria that a newspaper editor follows in selecting, abbreviating, or rejecting his copy.

#### PROGRAM FORM IN RELATION TO PURPOSE

With responsibility determined and general planning complete, the next step is to select the form for each program. The basic program forms are "talk," "dialogue," and "drama." Each is divided into numerous subdivisions which are adapted to different purposes. For example, the talk can be presented as a simple speech by one speaker, or may take the form of a number of speeches by several persons on the same program—occasionally called a symposium. This has the advantage of presenting different voices and different ideas within a single program unit. The program "You and Your Government," broadcast a few years ago, used three speakers in a half-hour period and provided a good example of the symposium form. The value of the talk as a form of presentation is that it is relatively simple. Given a well-known and effective speaker, it is most direct and economical in point of preparation time.

The classification, "dialogue," is used loosely in radio circles.

It consists of interviews, questions and answers, round tables, forums, and, in short, any program in which two or more speakers participate. It stands midway between talk and drama. The University of Chicago Round Table is perhaps the best example of the round table. The Town Meeting of the Air is the best of the forums. Interviews and the innumerable question-answer programs are such a common experience that illustrations need hardly be given. The dialogue is an ideal way to present controversy since both or several sides can be set forth on the same program, thus releasing the station from the obligation of offering an equivalent amount of time for reply. When well done, it has considerable advantage over the talk. It has greater spontaneity, more elasticity, and greater variety.

The third important form of radio presentation is the drama. It serves to popularize material as does none of the other forms. It is ideal for descriptive and demonstrative purposes. Where other forms may be used to transmit and vitalize significant information, the drama may be used to motivate and interest. Most difficult of the three forms, it calls for effective writing and careful production. The personnel agency would therefore do well to insist that the scripts of any radio drama that is undertaken be professionally written and station produced. The Cantril and Allport studies<sup>6</sup> indicate that radio listeners prefer drama above other forms, dialogue second, and straight talk third. But this depends, of course, on the purpose and personnel of the program, and to a lesser extent on station policy.

### *Program Development and Presentation*

Talks and dialogues may be presented by reading them from a script; by extemporizing from an outline; or by speaking impromptu. Talks are usually read from scripts while dialogues are not infrequently extemporized. Only a very few programs are impromptu (street quizzes, unprepared interviews) and for this reason the type need not be considered. Some stations insist on having a script delivered well in advance and then request the speaker to follow his text. The written and read talk

<sup>6</sup>G. W. Allport and H. Cantril, *Psychology in Radio* (New York: 1935).

has the advantage of smoothness and gives the speaker the chance to say exactly what he wants to say. Also, there is a permanent record of what has been said. Unfortunately, however, talks read from manuscript are frequently badly delivered.

Extemporaneous dialogue, on the other hand, may be jerky and thus lack the smoothness that is essential in a radio program. When carried on by persons who are skillful extemporizers, however, such a program generally has more naturalness and more spontaneity than the written and read program. But unless the speakers can "lift" the material off the outline as an actor reads his lines in a drama, unless they can make it sound natural, a straight talk would probably be more effective.

An important step in the preparation of a radio program is selecting the person or persons to do the broadcasting. This includes not only audition (sometimes competitive), but training in the technique of writing and speaking. For psychological effect the department head or another newsworthy name should always be the first choice. If he will cooperate an audition is not necessary. However, if the one chosen is a notably bad speaker or if the name is not particularly newsworthy, a competitive audition of the officials on the staff of the personnel agency might be tried. The program committee should listen and select the voice it wants to be the "voice of the department." Frequently it will be necessary to have one person prepare the script and another deliver the speech.

In writing the script, as in all forms of public address, the author should select not a subject but a purpose; cross his knowledge with audience interest; speak only on those phases with which he is familiar; and make the material significant, timely, or unusual. A logical, well-balanced outline, frequent illustration, short sentences, occasional repetition, an attractive introduction, and a conclusion that makes the talk sound finished are all important. The radio speech is not much different from the platform address except in the following points: the method of delivery, which should be that of animated conversation, the increased importance of the introduction, the necessity for condensation, and the difficulty in crossing knowledge with interest,

because the radio speaker has no way of sensing the response of his audience.

The script should be typed double spaced on fairly heavy paper and the sheets should not be clipped together. In rehearsal it is wise to have someone time the speech as the speaker reads it, noting the time on the script margin at the half and three-quarter points, so the speaker can know whether he needs to speed up or slow down. Some radio speakers set up the speech in such a way that any one of the last two or three paragraphs can be omitted if necessary.

In delivering a radio speech, the speaker needs a "sense of communication" more than a good voice. It is at this point that so many radio speakers fail to meet the test. Give them a script and they seem to lapse immediately into colorless delivery. As a matter of fact radio conversation needs considerable spirit.

One of the most effective methods of getting a radio speaker to speak in an animated conversational way is to put a friend across the microphone from him. Have him address the talk to that person, and urge the listener to react as normally as possible.

A radio speaker should adopt a fairly rapid rate of delivery, perhaps 120 to 140 words a minute, and the technique of "seeing" and feeling every word of the script. Microphone distance or "balance" with other voices will be given by the engineer, producer, or announcer. The script should not be held between the face and the microphone. As already mentioned, it should be on heavy paper so that when each page is finished the sheet may be dropped to the floor or slid off, to avoid a rustle that might be picked up by the microphone.

Little can be said about the technique of the interview and round table, except to urge that in both cases a carefully prepared outline be followed, and that all speakers extemporize rather than read a script. If the program personnel is made up of speakers who are not effective extemporaneously, some other program form should be selected. In the round table there are usually three (sometimes five) persons, one of whom serves as chairman. It is his function to keep the participants on the subject and to avoid long statements. Fairly frequent identification

of participants is necessary, and to this end they should often address one another by name. The preparation process begins with a preliminary meeting to acquaint the participants with the field to be covered. If the personnel is inexperienced, it will be necessary to follow this with a rehearsal, and sometimes with an audition before the broadcast. The chairman should prepare the outline, leaving space between items so that the others may write in notes. A summary should be planned and great care exercised to see that no one point consumes too much time. It is helpful, whenever possible, to use the same or a similar combination of speakers throughout the series, so that the habit of working together may be developed.

In the interview type of presentation, the interviewer is often an experienced radio man who is talking informally to the department representative about the latter's work. If this is the case, the person being interviewed will want to see the questions before the broadcast and make notes for his answers. When a representative of the personnel agency handles the interview, he should keep several points in mind: (1) Try to get the interview started rapidly by a good opening question; (2) strive to vary questions with statements that have the same effect as questions; (3) do not comment upon the answers given by the interviewees, but let the audience do that; (4) follow the answers closely so that, if necessary, the person being interviewed can be drawn out more fully (in this he need not follow the prepared outline exactly); (5) bring the interview to a graceful close; and (6) remember the principle of "pacing"—that is, changing the pace of the program at the proper time to avoid monotony.

The interviewer really represents the audience and asks questions that its members might ask if given the same opportunity. For that reason it is frequently wise to have someone who can extemporize, someone who, while not knowing too much about the field, has a lively sense of curiosity which will prompt him to ask discriminating questions. Preparation of the interview—as in the round table—starts with a conference and agreement on the field to be covered. Space is allotted in the outline for

notes. Sometimes that is the only rehearsal necessary. Among the advantages of the interview are that it can be prepared quickly, and that it brings to light material that might otherwise be overlooked in a speech by one who is more or less a master in the field.

For the inexperienced dramatist or radio man, radio drama is so complex that it is useless to attempt a careful analysis here. At least four steps are to be taken in broadcasting drama: (1) selecting and developing the material to be used, (2) preparing the script, (3) production, which includes casting, sound effects, music and direction, and (4) the broadcast itself. Radio drama has improved so much in the last few years that it has become a rather highly specialized art. As a minimum, it requires a capable script writer and producer. Some stations will have, in addition, specialists for sound and music. The problem of casting is always of vital importance. Because of these requirements the only recommendation that can be made to personnel agencies regarding the use of the drama is for them to recognize its value and to determine whether anyone in the agency has the background necessary to write and produce an effective script and program. A number of good books on the subject are available.<sup>7</sup> When these have been studied the personnel agency may get in touch with local radio workshops in colleges and high schools (if there are such) or a little theater group, to see whether assistance may be secured from one of these sources. Needless to say, close contact should be maintained with the station as the above steps are taken.

Once the program is on the air the problem remains of finding out whether it is reaching the public. Commercial sponsors use complicated methods ranging from mechanical devices to house-to-house surveys. The simplest device is to offer some pamphlet or other material to listeners who write in. Returns may then be analyzed as to characteristics of the writers and the areas they represent. This method is not entirely effective, how-

<sup>7</sup>See M. Wylie, *Radio Writing* (New York: 1939), J. S. Carlile, *Production and Direction of Radio Programs* (New York: 1939), and Waldo Abbot, *Handbook of Broadcasting* (New York: 1937).

ever, since it is impossible to determine what part of the audience has been moved to write. However, it is probably as far as the public agency can go within the limits of time and funds available.

#### SUMMARY

The detailed treatment of radio contained in this chapter is justified on the ground that broadcasting has now become one of the most effective means of catching the attention of large masses of people. At the same time, because of the variety of programs and the ease with which the listener can shift from one program to another, there is perhaps no type of public relations where competition for the public's attention is more keen. The personnel agency will do well to give systematic thought to the best utilization of such opportunities as it has and may acquire. In doing so, it is well to bear in mind that station managers are ready to allot a certain amount of time to educational programs and particularly those related to the public service. Radio stations must everlastingly seek approval as public service institutions. The alert personnel administrator will take advantage of this policy in every reasonable way.

However, long-run success in broadcasting will depend on careful planning and preparation. It cannot be left to chance or assigned to a subordinate who happens to have a little free time. Most listeners have favorite programs which they faithfully follow. Likewise, they have spotted certain other programs which they invariably avoid because on some earlier occasion they found them boring. The well-run station soon learns of these audience classifications. In view of these considerations, it is recommended that the personnel agency give considerable attention to its policy in the matter of radio broadcasting. Radio stations as a "public" are important enough to warrant special attention on the part of public relations officers, and the radio audience itself is such that only specially trained staff members will be skillful enough to get and hold its attention.

## *Chapter IX*

### **Photography and Films As Public Relations Devices**

**T**o supplement the appeal of the printed or spoken word or to tell a story in its own right, there is no more valuable medium than photography. "Say it with pictures" is a slogan that has brought increased interest to the advertising and news sections of newspapers and magazines. Motion pictures are the world's most popular entertainment. Educators are turning more and more to visual aids to dramatize the information they have to present. Here, then, is another medium which government in general and the personnel agency in particular can use to capture the attention and understanding of the public.

The civil service is confronted with a special obstacle that has not usually existed in other areas where movies have been successfully used. It is the widespread lack of alertness concerning the whole problem of public relations on the part of personnel agencies. When the personnel agency knows what it wants the public to understand and appreciate, it will find that films and photographs will be able to say it, and say it with a force that, according to pedagogical tests, outlasts radio and the printed word.

#### **STILL PHOTOGRAPHY**

Still pictures can be used to illustrate printed matter in news releases, popularized reports, and exhibits. Singly or in sequence they can be used to convey information directly, as evidenced by the recent birth of a whole series of picture magazines and picture textbooks. The ordinary illustrative photograph dealing with some newsworthy person or event is rapidly being supplemented by dramatized photograph series, highlighting either some nameless person in a commonplace event or some promi-



nent official in an unusual setting. Government agencies still rely chiefly on the traditional type when they use photographs at all. Experience has proved, however, that newspapers and periodicals will print pictures, and that they will point up an otherwise dull report. This warrants a more frequent use of this medium than has been customary.

The story-telling or documentary photograph holds great possibilities, as has been demonstrated dramatically in the prize-winning work of the Resettlement Administration. This type of pictorial dramatization opens up an avenue that should be carefully explored by the public relations division.<sup>1</sup> To a surprising extent personnel agencies have left the photographic field almost untouched. Of all the personnel reports and publications of various types examined in connection with the present study, only the annual reports of the New York City Civil Service Commission showed evidence of systematic use of photographic illustrations.

In connection with day-to-day operations, newspapers and periodicals will gladly run pictures of examinations and other personnel activities.<sup>2</sup> The pictorial possibilities of "men at work," illustrating unusual government jobs, are practically inexhaustible. Again, an examination bulletin or poster illustrated with a dramatic photograph of one aspect of the job to be filled would be sure to catch many more eyes than the customary mimeographed sheet of solid text. A picture-story leaflet showing stage by stage the process of getting and holding a public job would not only be widely read but would do much to increase interest in and understanding of the agency's work.

Photography is such a widespread hobby that almost any office can produce a good amateur cameraman. In most of the larger jurisdictions one or more departments employ professional photographers who can be pressed into service by the personnel

<sup>1</sup> See *U. S. Camera* 1937 and 1938 for examples.

See also McCamy, *op. cit.*, p. 79 ff., for a general discussion of federal photography.

<sup>2</sup> Commissioner Wallace Sayre of the New York City Civil Service Commission reports that the newspapers made photographs of policemen and policewomen taking physical examinations and also of practical work tests for welders and lifeguards.

agency. Since the routine work of these men usually involves only photographs for engineering and legal purposes, they may require some tutelage by the agency representative before they are able to take pictures of the quality required for news and documentary photographs.

Slides and film-strips are an inexpensive means of presenting a series of photographs to groups. Both have value as aids in school courses, in addresses, and in exhibits. The film-strip is the newer and more convenient device, being merely a series of still pictures on movie film. To increase their effectiveness, they may be synchronized with music or speaking.

#### MOTION PICTURES

Motion pictures are the most effective of all the photographic media, and are well adapted to use by the personnel agency. One of their most obvious uses is in recruiting. There are literally dozens, if not hundreds, of positions which readily lend themselves to film treatment, positions in which drama and interesting action come into play. The job of the railway mail clerk, the "G-man," the fireman, the policeman, the engineer in the water purification and the sewage disposal plants, the office appliance operator, and many other workers involve action suitable for filming.

Material of this sort is also well suited to arousing the interest of the general public in a more or less continuous campaign of education in the affairs of government. Motion picture theaters often include short films in their regular programs, particularly if the setting is local. Schools and colleges welcome such aids. Almost any one of the manifold governmental activities may lend itself to reproduction on the screen.<sup>3</sup>

The principal difficulty in getting such a program under way is the same difficulty that has been holding up the use of films in the educational field—lack of money. Approximately \$3,000

<sup>3</sup> One commentator has gone so far as to suggest that ultimately a film should be prepared covering each important job, showing the worker at work, and that the appropriate film be shown before selected audiences whenever an examination for a given position is announced.

would be required to make a 15-minute sound movie showing a city's taxing machinery and personnel. This is a low estimate and is probably a minimum figure. In most large cities there are professional producers of short films who might be able to do a good job on such assignments. However, these producers are interested primarily in films as advertising media and their production standards and sympathy with the subject matter might not be all that could be desired. It would probably be better to engage a producing unit that has had experience in making educational and documentary films. If it were necessary to import equipment and crews, costs would rise correspondingly.

The estimate of \$3,000 is based on a film photographed in 35 mm. silent with the sound added later. A film made in this way would be suitable for theater showing, which is necessary if the general public is to be reached. From the 35 mm. film, reduction prints in the 16 mm. size can be made. These are usually more convenient for showing in schools, clubs, and churches, and other places where one depends on a portable projector.

The seemingly large expenditure that has been quoted may not appear so great when it is remembered that a film can be used frequently and for a long time. If a film is to be made with long life in mind, the things that "date" it rapidly, like emphasis on styles of dress, should be avoided. Then, too, once the film has been made it can be re-edited quite easily and additions can be inserted to keep abreast of the most recent developments in the field.

Finally, commercial motion picture companies may be persuaded to cover some aspects of government service in newsreels, educational "shorts," or occasional full-length features. The potentialities of movies as publicity media, however, can probably best be exploited on a national rather than a local basis, through such organizations as the National Civil Service Reform League or the Civil Service Assembly.

Until recently the number of films dealing with public personnel activities has been negligible. Of the few films made, perhaps the most notable is the one produced as part of the "March

of Time" series, depicting a typical spoils-driven political machine in action. This phase of public relations is, of course, one that offers more dramatic possibilities than almost any other, but there is no reason why the same technique cannot be applied to a pictorial documentation of the constructive program of reform and betterment which the merit system is trying to establish.

The personnel commission of the Louisville, Kentucky, Health and Welfare Departments at one time considered a film which, according to Mrs. Laura B. Lewis, the personnel director, would start out with a news shot showing a small ad in a local classified column seeking applicants for the post of milk inspector.<sup>4</sup>

In this connection, mention might be made of the film sponsored by the New York City Civil Service Commission in cooperation with the W.P.A. Federal Arts Project. This film, which was shown at the New York World's Fair in 1939, dramatized the merit system in a large city in effective fashion.

A rather specialized kind of picture might be produced for public personnel agencies, designed to improve the conduct of personnel workers in their dealings with the public. This would apply particularly to those members of the staff who serve as information clerks, as examination monitors, and in similar roles. If they could see, with the aid of a movie, what their job really looked like to the citizen seeking an opportunity for employ-

<sup>4</sup>In a personal letter Mrs. Lewis writes:

This would be followed by a picture of a group of young men in front of our bulletin board at the City Hall reading the detailed announcement; the educational qualifications, etc. Then perhaps one of the girls interviewing an applicant who tries to insist on filling out a blank who is obviously unfit for the job. Then I plan to have some Junior League girls (and Oh, so pretty!) acting as monitors during the written examination. This would be followed by the practical and oral examination given by some of the dairy men from the agricultural college on the farm of some nearby dairy. (This part, of course, would be included to demonstrate that tests are not always of a "pencil and paper" variety only.) And so on through the appointment, assignment to work; the probationary period and interview to discuss future possibilities, etc. On the same features I may include some short sketches of examining public health nurses and social workers in a baby clinic in order to tie in the feminine interest. It would be necessary of course to include a good deal of humor on the ABC level to keep the feature from being dry. I am confident that such a local movie feature will do more to stimulate "alive" interest in the work of our commission—and more genuine respect for the merit system generally—than a dozen annual reports, or the endless series of talks before tired luncheon groups. I think it should be of use also to present to high school students.

ment, they would approach their duties with a keener sense of the potentialities for fostering more cordial relationships with those they serve.

#### SUMMARY

In this chapter we have attempted only to point to the vistas that appear to those interested in the systematic treatment of public relations. Photography and the movies offer opportunities that should be exploited. In view of the demonstrated effectiveness of these devices in other areas, there is reason to believe that they may become a most fruitful feature of the public relations program. Although scarcity of funds is the greatest barrier to progress in this direction, this might be surmounted by pooling funds from several organizations so that one agency, otherwise well equipped, might gradually form a library of films sufficiently general in application to permit their use by all agencies participating in the program. The Civil Service Assembly might properly serve as the repository and distributing center for such a film library.

## Chapter X

### **Public Speech as a Public Relations Medium**

AMONG the methods for presenting both general policy and immediate issues to all types of high-interest publics, the public address has always occupied a leading place. Its major advantage as compared with other media comes from its flexibility, since it can be organized and pitched to suit the exact requirements of the situation in which it is given.

Millions of words on civil service are delivered annually to employees, civic groups, school classes, and conventions. While some agencies avoid speeches whenever possible, others cultivate all opportunities to give them. The latter policy is strongly recommended. In the Los Angeles area various governmental agencies have formed speakers clubs to train employees in the speaking art.<sup>1</sup> These clubs also serve as a clearing house for civic groups seeking speakers on public affairs. The reports from this enterprise indicate such a degree of success that other agencies would be well advised to follow this lead.

But if speeches are to be delivered, they must be delivered well. There is a vast literature on public speaking, but only certain minimum essentials will be presented here.

#### THE ART OF SPEAKING IN PUBLIC

The problem facing all public speakers—beginners and veterans alike—can be stated quite simply: "How may I say something worth while effectively?" The purpose of this section is to answer this question. Public speaking is a fascinating pursuit. All speaking is alike in at least one respect; the speaker strives to focus the

<sup>1</sup>Olson, Emery E., *The Speakers Club of Los Angeles*, Civil Service Assembly, Pamphlet No. 4, July, 1936.

attention of the audience upon his thought, to carry the audience with him for a certain length of time and to arrive at a stopping place with everyone still present. The speaker directs the thoughts and feelings of his audience throughout the whole speech. This is not an unloading process but a carefully worked out plan of interest and motivation. A good speech has movement of thought and feeling and is the result of an interaction between the speaker, the occasion, and the audience. A speech fails if there is a deficiency in one of these factors. The first factor to be discussed is the speaker.

### *Methods of Presentation*

Fortunate indeed is the man who, in addition to possessing the knowledge necessary for speaking, has a good voice, graceful action, and self-confidence. The importance of delivery cannot be overestimated; many forceful writers fail as public speakers because they lack an equally forceful delivery. The four methods of oral delivery are as follows:

*Impromptu.* This requires no preparation whatsoever. In this case the individual may be called upon for remarks, or he may be moved to speak because of something which has been said. The impromptu speech for an important occasion is to be discouraged, as it often gives rise to misunderstandings on the part of the listener. Clear thinking and appropriate language are the products of a lifetime of effort and are rarely at one's disposal on the spur of the moment.

*Reading from manuscript.* This may be done at a formal occasion or a time of controversy when material must be carefully presented. The disadvantages of this mode of delivery are obvious. Under favorable circumstances, the speaker should be free to use the responses of his audience—their smiles, their shrugs, their various behaviors, which serve as an index of their response to the words spoken. This cannot be done while reading a manuscript. The speaker, tied to a copy before him, cannot possibly take advantage of the spontaneous reactions which may be sensed from time to time; and if there are interruptions, they will unduly interfere with his command of the situation and

may throw him off his stride. The speaker does not *unload* ideas—he *arouses* thought, feeling, and action. The responses of his audience are vital to his success. For these reasons, reading from a manuscript should be discouraged.

*The memorized speech.* This also is usually unsatisfactory. In addition to the handicaps of reading from manuscript already cited, there is the possibility of forgetting—and no experience could be more embarrassing.

*Extemporaneous speaking.* The fourth method of delivery is by far the best. After careful preparation in which the speech may even have been written out in full, the speaker stands before his audience—with or without notes—and delivers his address. He knows the content of his speech and the sequence in which his thoughts will be presented, but his words and phrases are largely the products of the moment. There are dangers in this method, too, and they should be thoroughly understood. The speaker often hesitates for words and distracts his listeners. He may frequently be guilty of useless repetition, and there is often a tendency to lapse into personal characteristics of style which might irritate an audience. Many extemporaneous speakers ramble or overemphasize a particular idea. But great as these potential dangers are, the advantages of the method recommend it.

The skillful extemporaneous speaker is able to use the responses of his audience to further his purpose. The reaction of the audience determines what he will say next. If an idea is not clear, another example may be used. If the audience is tired, humor may be employed to bring relaxation, or an illustration used to introduce an emotional note which may change the reaction of the audience. Extemporaneous speaking allows freedom of expression, gesture, subtle changes of pitch, changes of quality and emphasis—all to great advantage.

### *Desirable Qualities of Delivery*

There are certain desirable characteristics of delivery which the skillful speaker possesses. One is a conversational manner. Good speaking does not differ basically from good conversation.



The speaker tries to be friendly and pleasant. He looks at his audience and talks to it directly. The conversational manner develops good will and the listeners become an integral part of the situation.

The second characteristic is enthusiasm for the subject. Nothing is more boring than listening to a speaker who lacks earnestness. If he is not genuinely interested in his topic, he cannot expect the audience to become so. The speaker who does not possess a variety of action and voice will soon put his listeners to sleep. On the other hand, animation and enthusiasm will generate a similar mood in the audience.

The third characteristic is good pronunciation. Audiences seldom respect a speaker who has incorrect or faulty pronunciation. The use of "dese" and "dose," "becuz" and similar lapses is as much a misdemeanor in the law of public address as is the adoption of an affected accent under the misapprehension that it denotes culture. No audience will listen to a speaker whose words they must decode before they can understand them. To succeed, every speaker should seek to acquire an acceptable pronunciation.

Related to pronunciation is enunciation. Americans are among the worst enunciators of all civilized people. We are accustomed to keep our mouths almost closed when we speak. We drop consonants at the ends of words and run words together. We slur most of our vowels. It would be well for those ambitious to make an effective appeal to their audiences to train themselves or be trained in the enunciation of vowels and consonants. This does not mean a sonorous style of speech, a dwelling on sounds for sound's sake, but rather an habitual sharpening up, a crispness in the production of the sounds that make up the spoken language.

The fourth characteristic is a good voice. By this is meant variety and control of pitch, proper timing, pleasant quality, and the use of vigor. The best pitch for speaking is the middle register. A high-pitched voice soon becomes distracting and a low-pitched one becomes monotonous. A voice in the middle register can, when necessary, make use of a higher pitch and

likewise a lower one, depending upon the ideas which the speaker wishes to impart. Changes of quality are necessary to portray moods, to indicate fear, indignation, and excitement. The skillful speaker recognizes the value of these variations.

The fifth desirable quality in a speaker is variety of action. The purpose of action is to enforce the ideas which the speaker is trying to convey orally, or to communicate ideas without the use of the voice. Movements of the speaker's body, the use of his hands, and facial expression are essential. Eye contact is of inestimable value. If the audience is small, the speaker can look directly at particular individuals and talk to them personally for a short period. If the audience is large, he can look at specific sections and then let his glance range over the whole group. Eye contact suggests good will and assists in keeping the attention of the group. The speaker with an immobile face is not liked by an audience. Smiles and changes in facial expression supplement the voice.

The last characteristic of a good delivery is forcefulness. The speaker must be heard. Important words and phrases require emphasis but not dogmatic emphasis. Variations in force are essential for good speaking. Timing or speed must be carefully considered. Very rapid speech will not be understood by the audience. On the other hand, slow speech will result in the loss of attention. It is important to recognize the use of the pause, for at certain points effective speaking requires silence rather than speech. The rate of utterance depends upon the ideas involved, the size of the room, and the number of people present.

Three types of gesture may be described briefly: first, the descriptive gesture in which the speaker indicates the size or shape of an object by the use of his hands; second, the emotional gesture in which he displays feeling, as, for instance, by waving a clenched fist; third, the suggestive gesture, of which the holding up of the palm of the hand to indicate *stop* is an example. Gesture and movement are of great assistance in conveying thought. Variations of voice and action depend upon the ideas involved, for meaning is at all times paramount.

### PREPARING THE SPEECH

In order to prepare an effective speech it is necessary for the speaker to know the nature of the occasion at which he is expected to appear, since the purpose of the gathering is a determining factor in speech construction. Is it an after-dinner speech? Is his appearance the main item on the program? Is he one of several speakers? Will he be questioned afterwards? Where is the place of meeting? At what time is he to speak? Are there certain rules of procedure which he should know? Because the occasion may determine entirely the purpose of the speech, each occasion must be thoroughly analyzed in advance. It is a mistake to assume that when a speech is once prepared it can be given before any group. Only if the interests and beliefs which the audiences hold are similar can the same address be delivered on several different occasions.

#### *Developing the Content*

Before formulating a speech outline, the composition of the group must be known. What is the age level? Sex? Politics? Religious affiliation? Prejudices? Social position? Occupation? Education? Special interests? What is their attitude toward your subject matter? In order to give a successful speech, the speaker should make a careful analysis of his audience in advance.

The material to be used may be obtained from personal experience, reading, interviews, and correspondence. The purpose of looking extensively for subject matter is to gain a thorough knowledge of the topic, and in case of controversy, to find material on both sides of the question.

The outline of a speech—that is, the arrangement of the subject matter—may be drawn up after the topic has been decided upon and the occasion and audience analyzed. The material should then be arranged in the most effective manner. The outline, consisting of words, phrases, and sentences, may be called the *structural phase* of speaking. This structure partakes of life only when it is presented before an audience—which may be

designated as the *functional phase* of speaking. A speech has function—that is, movement of ideas and feeling accompanied by appropriate voice and action—when the subject matter is presented in an interesting and motivating manner.

The first step in outlining is to determine what response is desired. Write down a statement of the specific purpose! The object may be: (1) *To inform* the audience of a proposed major administrative policy; (2) *to entertain* the audience with a travelogue; (3) *to convince* the audience of the need for a larger appropriation for a program; or (4) *to persuade* the audience to give active support to the merit system. It will be noted that in each of the above instances the general purpose is italicized and is followed by a specific goal to be achieved. This is important. Before attempting to draw up the outline of a speech, know the purpose to be achieved.

### *A Suggested Developmental Outline*

The following form and explanations will be of assistance in outlining a speech. The italicized words indicate steps in motivation which will give movement and insure success.

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Get *Attention* by a device which fits the situation, such as:
  - 1. Literary quotation
  - 2. Illustration
  - 3. Greeting
  - 4. Reference to subject or occasion
  - 5. Startling statement
  - 6. Rhetorical question, etc.
- B. Give necessary explanation

#### II. BODY

- A. If the general purpose is to entertain, the body of the speech will consist of a series of interesting instances, repartee, and humor. No other motive development is needed.
- B. If the general purpose is to inform, to convince, or to arouse to action, the first requirement in the body of the speech is to create a *Need*.
- C. *Fulfillment* follows need: Here the purpose is to show how the need may be satisfied. The body of an informative speech

consists solely of this step. The need is satisfied by giving information.

- D. In speeches of persuasion where the aim is conviction or action, the arousal of *Desire* follows fulfilment, if the desire for the specific purpose is weak or non-existent. This may be done by showing in vivid and personal language what results will follow if the specific purpose is accepted or is not accepted.

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. For a speech of entertainment: No formal conclusion is necessary. The best incident is usually reserved for the end.
- B. For a speech of information: Conclude by showing the value of such information for the audience.
- C. For a speech of conviction: Have a formal summary of the reasons for the position advocated which will produce the belief desired.
- D. For a speech leading to overt activity: To produce the desired *Action* an appeal to the feelings may be required. A closing illustration touching the emotions of the audience is the best method.

### SUMMARY

The day of the spell-binder's old-fashioned oratory has passed, but the spoken word still retains its power to inform, to persuade, and, most important, to rouse into action. A medium of great flexibility, public speaking requires of its practitioners poise, preparation, and effective delivery, in addition to a knowledge of subject matter, if its full potentialities are to be realized.

The personnel agency which includes on its staff one or more able speakers is wasting a valuable asset if it does not capitalize on these talents in prosecuting its public relations program. It is particularly desirable that the executive officer of the agency be a capable speaker, for he will have frequent opportunities at public gatherings, both large and small, to represent his organization and its activities. If he is seriously deficient in this respect, competent tutoring may be necessary. Any library or bookstore has on its shelves a dozen texts on the art of public address,

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and the purchase of a comprehensive guide for the staff library is a sound investment.<sup>2</sup>

To many, politics and public speaking are synonymous. This much is certain: Few successful politicians have gained either personal adherents or supporters of their views without the ability to talk freely, forcefully, and frequently. In this respect, the personnel director can well learn a lesson from those who are frequently his foes. If he and his aides can perform capably before an audience, this ability put to work will return rich dividends in terms of support for the merit system.

<sup>2</sup>Among the texts that deserve consideration in this connection are the following: W. M. Brigrance, *Speech Composition* (New York: Crofts, 1937); J. Dolman, Jr., *A Handbook of Public Speaking* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1934); C. H. Woolbert and J. F. Smith, *Fundamentals of Speech* (New York: Harpers, 1934); H. A. Overstreet, *Influencing Human Behavior* (New York: Norton, 1925); A. H. Monroe, *Principles and Types of Speech* (New York: Scott, Foresman, 1939); H. B. Gislason, *The Art of Effective Speaking* (New York: Heath, 1934); H. J. Hollingworth, *Psychology of the Audience* (New York: American Book Co., 1935).

## *Chapter XI*

### **Participation and Cooperation**

**P**ARTICIPATION of citizens, line officials, and employees in the policy formation and operation of the personnel department is advocated by several of the leading authorities as contributing to effective management, particularly in its public relations aspect. Nothing is so likely to promote understanding and support of an agency and its program as a feeling of partnership in it. Planned participation may provide many influential persons with the incentive to shift from a critical attitude to one of approval and support. A policy under discussion may thereby become not "their" policy, but "our" policy.

The range of opportunities for employee participation in a personnel program will be treated in a companion report in this series.<sup>1</sup> It will not be discussed here, except to point out that every activity that serves to identify the employees with the personnel agency is a worth-while public relations effort in the broad definition of this term.

#### **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN AGENCY ACTIVITIES**

Active participation by representatives of special interest groups and the general public has been urged in connection with the suggested use of the radio committee. Other opportunities for similarly combining the functions of improving a particular project and winning understanding and support for the agency as a whole will present themselves to alert personnel administrators. Calling in industrial personnel men in connection with a comparative pay survey is only one example. The position classification survey offers another opportunity for securing the active cooperation of outside professional groups,

<sup>1</sup>See the report of the Committee on Employee Relations.

particularly those having a substantial representation in the public service. Thus in Westchester County, New York, the professional social work organizations were invited to participate in the development of a classification plan for social work positions.

The most common opportunity for employee, official, and citizen participation in personnel work is in the recruitment process. Here competent persons may be invited to serve as special examiners for positions in their particular fields or in providing references for applicants. Such participation is widely used. In many cases it represents almost the sum total of public relations efforts. Examples of the use of this method are many. The Milwaukee County Civil Service Commission, for example, frequently invites representative citizens to sit on advisory committees for special problems. The executive officer of the agency endeavors to select representatives from organizations and minority groups who are likely to be interested in the issue under consideration. In the recruitment process contact is made with many groups, and individuals are asked to help the personnel agency find qualified applicants. Citizens are used on the examining boards conducting performance tests. Examining boards for higher positions usually include five or more people, and among them representative citizens are always included. When it is necessary to import from outside the county, citizens in the community are asked for assistance and advice on what experts to select. In short, whenever there is any activity that will lend itself to citizen participation, the chief examiner utilizes the occasion both for getting the job done and for improving public relations.<sup>2</sup>

The Personnel Board of Jefferson County, Alabama, which also handles personnel for the city of Birmingham, reports that its contacts with professional organizations have been eminently worth while. The state and local branches of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Purchasing Agents Association, the Real Estate Board, and the Bar Association, all have been asked for assistance in writing specifications and preparing examina-

<sup>2</sup>Interview with David Jennings.



tions in their respective fields. As reported by James H. Hard, Jr., Director of Personnel:<sup>3</sup>

In each instance the Association has appointed a committee of outstanding men in their field who have given freely of their time and talents to assist us, not only in preparing material, but in encouraging qualified applicants to compete in the tests.

An effective follow-up system is described by Mr. Hard:

After these examinations are held we ask the committee to meet with us to review our system of grading and to criticize the test as given. We follow up this conference by attending a meeting of the Association or Society and reporting fully on the results. We have found these associations decidedly worth while and believe we have gained a widespread appreciation of our efforts.

The Phoenix, Arizona, Civil Service Commission has actively sought the support of all civic organizations in recruitment. Particularly widespread use of citizens and officials in preparing written tests and conducting oral examinations is noted in the practice of the California State Personnel Board and the Los Angeles County Civil Service Commission. Over 400 prominent citizens of special competency served on boards used by the State Personnel Board during the 1936-37 biennium, while more than 120 citizens and officials served the Los Angeles County Commission during the fiscal year 1937-38. Among the many personnel agencies which make more or less extensive use of such participation are those in Baltimore, Minneapolis, Portland, Oregon, Tacoma, Cleveland, Alameda County, California, and the states of Connecticut and Michigan.

While most of the jurisdictions that have tried this policy are enthusiastic about its public relations value, it is only fair to record the questions raised by some agencies. Thus one state was forced to abandon the system despite its public relations value because of the lack of skill of the citizen-examiners on oral boards and because of professional jealousies aroused by the appointment of one person or a member of one group in a particular field and the neglect of another. The United States

<sup>3</sup>Personal letter, April 29, 1939.

Civil Service Commission is also reported to look askance at the participation of outsiders in its oral examinations. Despite such adverse criticism, the preponderance of opinion seems favorable to the utilization of outside citizen assistance, both because of the value of the aid given and because of the wisdom of winning support for the objectives of the merit system.

A variation in the method of seeking cooperation on examinations was reported by the Civil Service Commission of Canada in 1915.<sup>4</sup> The Commission considered it desirable to have the cooperation of high schools in recruiting some of their employees. The high school teachers were therefore asked to help prepare and grade examinations. The secretary's comment on the system was ". . . if you have the teachers in your high schools associated with the work, they are in a better position to explain the system to their pupils and we have found it works admirably."<sup>5</sup>

In general, proper handling of citizens as aids along the lines just described calls for discretion in the selection of individuals and group representatives so that assignments may be equitably distributed. Another consideration to be kept in mind is the common local taboo against the use of nonresidents on examining boards. If outsiders are required, the reasons for seeking their aid should be carefully explained to local groups, and, as the Milwaukee County Commission has done, local organizations should be asked to suggest names of outside experts.

The value of the time of these citizen aids should be considered constantly. No one person should be asked to contribute too frequently. When a person does consent to serve, every precaution should be taken to insure that the services are performed expeditiously and that appreciation is expressed in a suitable manner. A number of commissions and other divisions have adopted the practice of listing in the detailed annual report the names of those cooperating with the agency. This practice might well be generally followed.

<sup>4</sup>Reported in Barthell, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>William Foran, "The Civil Service Law in Canada," in *Proceedings, Civil Service Assembly*, 1915, p. 17.

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A significant contribution to good public relations can be made by the skillful handling of references given by applicants for employment. Here the agency will have recourse to previous or present employers. Careful thought should be given to the form and contents of both the letter seeking the reference and of the questions asked. If these are handled in an unskillful or unbusinesslike manner, an impression will be created that will have an adverse effect on the standing of the personnel agency among influential members of the community.

In seeking discriminating and honest references, it is advisable to build up cooperation through personal contacts. It is common experience that a writer of references will use greater discrimination in writing to a person with whom he is acquainted than to one whom he might address: "To Whom It May Concern." Standards of honesty in references seem to be flexible, to say the least. It may be taken for granted that most "referees" suggested by a candidate are well disposed toward the latter. Their judgment is all too often colored by the desire to do their acquaintance or former employee a good turn. How many prospective employers are accustomed to discount references as a matter of course because of the standards followed?

In the light of the above illustrations, we may conclude that a resourceful personnel head can find and may even make opportunities for bringing about some degree of participation on the part of those both inside and outside the government. As for the latter, he will discover a surprising amount of willingness to sacrifice time for the good of the public service, particularly if the citizens called upon have some special contribution to make because of their knowledge, position, or influence.

## Chapter XII

### Informal Contacts

THE public relations devices discussed thus far are the more or less planned and formal methods, organized in advance and used largely to convey information. They are special projects and must be treated as such. Another aspect of public relations activity is in our opinion even more important, although much less tangible and hence more difficult to treat. It is interwoven into every activity of the personnel agency. This is the whole range of direct personal contact with members of the general public. In a large city direct contacts between civil servants and citizens probably run daily into the tens of thousands. For example, inquiries at the information desk at the Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission alone numbered 76,389 in a single year.<sup>1</sup>

#### IMPORTANCE OF PERSON-TO-PERSON CONTACTS

Even though farsighted policies and perfect techniques are in effect with regard to all the media previously considered, the personal attitude of Citizen John Jones toward his government may be crystallized in the few moments when he, as a candidate for employment or as a motorist or taxpayer, stands face to face with the personnel employee, the policeman, or treasurer to conduct his business. All the press releases in the world will not change his attitude if he has found these personal contacts unsatisfactory. On the other hand, good impressions created in such direct contacts will survive almost any amount of neglect of the more formal public relations activities. The attention they give to personal contacts is the reason why some personnel agencies with almost no formal public relations pro-

<sup>1</sup>*Annual Report, 1931-32, p. 7.*

gram can and do have excellent relations with their "publics."

The essence of a sound policy in this respect may be summarized quite simply. It involves doing and saying the right thing in the right way at the right time, and always with due regard for standards of courtesy. To prescribe the ways and means of achieving this result is not so simple. Every contact situation is a problem in itself. No set of rules will provide an accurate guide to proper practice in even one agency. It is therefore pointless to attempt to prescribe definite rules that are suited for general application to all agencies. Although each situation is unique, there are elements of similarity which run through all situations involving personal contacts. If by analysis of these common points, certain broad generalizations can be discovered and then brought to the attention of employees, the ground work for an effective policy will be laid. For the rest, one must depend on the intelligence of the individual.

Improvement of contact practices can come only through organized efforts to train employees in such matters. The value of such training is thoroughly appreciated by private agencies. Large corporations, particularly public utilities, whose very bread and butter depend on public good will, have concentrated attention on this subject for many years. "Public contact training has a place in the program of every company which has employees dealing with customers," says one private management authority.<sup>2</sup>

Private efforts along this line vary from the familiar "pep" talks on courtesy to the permanent and comprehensive programs of contact analysis and training practiced by the larger utilities. An example of an elaborate policy on these matters may be found in the practice of some branches of the Bell Telephone Company. Here the desk of each employee who comes in contact with the public is wired with a hidden microphone, which is connected to a monitor's board. For each five or six employees there is one monitor who does nothing but listen in on across-the-desk and telephone conversations of her group and check

<sup>2</sup>Byron F. Field, *Public Contact Training*, American Management Association, Public Relation Series No. 2, p. 4.

for any possible flaws in the contacts made. Each employee is required to keep a brief written memorandum of the subject discussed and his disposition of every inquiry. These memoranda are regularly checked by the monitors to make sure that each contact has been satisfactorily terminated. One branch company using this technique has spent fifteen years in the refinement of its practices.

Public agencies have paid scarcely any systematic attention to the informal contact. In recent years scattered experiments in contact training have been carried on by the Farm Credit Administration, the Los Angeles County and Minneapolis Employees' Associations, and the City of Milwaukee. In its various divisions, the United States Department of Agriculture has emphasized this matter in general orientation training programs. The British Post Office likewise gives intensive training to postal clerks.

On the whole, however, almost any modern department store or electrical utility company could describe a training program that far outstrips the best efforts of public agencies. Yet surely the public agency, if it is to succeed, must please its "customers" as much as any private corporation. Indeed its contact problems are even more important because of the relative size, complexity, and cost of government service. Even though the competitive element does not enter into public service, those responsible for policy determination will do well to see to it that the public is pleased in its direct dealing with public officials.

#### TRAINING EMPLOYEES FOR PUBLIC CONTACTS

How can a personnel agency set out to improve its contacts with its publics? The discussion which follows is directed toward the problem of the public personnel agency, so far as it is responsible for training its own or all employees. With slight adaptations, however, the program is applicable to the work of any government agency which has direct dealings with the public, no matter who is responsible for the training function.

Selection and training of contact employees is one of the spots at which the personnel agency can best fulfill its responsibility,

both in its own interest and in the interest of the public relations of the entire jurisdiction. The first step in the development of improved contact practice is to convince the top men of the need and value of efforts in this direction, and to obtain their cooperation and support. As Field says:<sup>3</sup>

The first fundamental in the consideration of embarking on a public contact training program must be the acceptance by management of its responsibility for the continuance as well as the inauguration of the program. This acceptance of responsibility must be authoritative and genuine. It cannot be half-hearted, tentative or lethargic. From the chief executive through the responsible department heads, the fact and the spirit of the enterprise must be sensed or the program will die either at its birth or ultimately simply from neglect. Next, management cannot accept the responsibility and immediately delegate it to some individual or staff groups and feel that it has done its part. . . . This can be overcome by giving management a place in the program.

Such a program cannot be undertaken either as incidental or as a sort of feature event. To be continuously successful it must be installed as an inseparable part of the company's personnel and public relations program. It is a personnel activity and management's attitude toward it should be the same as toward employment and promotion, that is, it should be a fixed part of the company's program involving definite standards and procedures.

If personal discussion fails to persuade management to accept this responsibility, Field suggests that the proposal be supported by an analysis of the effectiveness of present contact practice. This can be done by surveying attitudes of various publics by methods similar to those previously described; by analysis of complaints and criticisms; or by what is known as "service-sampling." This involves assigning to special employees the role of ordinary citizens, having them carry on various types of normal transactions and then report on how the contacts were handled. These techniques are discussed in greater detail on the pages which follow.

Once top management and line executives are convinced of the desirability of a contact improvement program, the program itself should be instituted through a written order from the chief

<sup>3</sup>Field, *op. cit.*, p. 5. The following discussion draws heavily on this source.

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executive. It is strongly recommended that a committee of upper executives be formed to make general recommendations regarding the scope and purpose of the plan. Such a committee should include responsible representatives of all departments involved. Operating responsibility for the program should be centralized in one person, possibly the training director or the head of the personnel office.

Because responsibility for the continuing effectiveness of the program will rest on line supervisors, these minor executives should be formed into a second committee to review the proposed program, supervise its execution, and analyze its results in considerable detail.

Once sponsorship of the program and general cooperation are assured, the next step is to determine the general scope and content of the program. While each agency will have to build the details of its program to suit its special needs, certain elementary points are more or less generally applicable.

### *Essential Elements in Good Public Contacts*

Many years of analysis of contact situations by experts in private industry have shown that six major factors enter into successful handling of contact situations. Neglect of any of these elements opens the door to dissatisfaction on the part of the person being served. The elements are:

1. A service attitude
2. Interest in the "customer"
3. Adequate information
4. Courtesy
5. Effective speech
6. Proper personal appearance and habits

*The Service Attitude.* Where the "service attitude" exists, every employee of the agency from the top executive to the office boy or unskilled laborer is constantly aware of the fact that his function is to serve the public. From this awareness, as well as that of the entire organization, there comes a wholehearted will to do everything possible to improve the quantity and quality of the service. Beyond the desire to provide technically adequate



service, there is an urge to give this service freely, pleasantly, and unselfishly, going beyond, if necessary, the strict requirements of rule and duty.

These sound like copybook maxims—things that everyone knows. Yet the opposite of this happy situation exists in many government offices. Indeed, the atrophy of the service attitude is one of the earmarks of bureaucracy and hence an important concern of progressive personnel agencies. Presence or absence of this service attitude may be detected in the very atmosphere of an office. Some offices are characterized by a prompt, courteous, and cheerful response to customer needs. In others the least request for service is treated as an unwarranted intrusion on the time of the employee approached. The development of proper attitudes, of course, goes beyond the scope of any contact improvement program. It is inextricably bound up with all the factors that make for improved morale. Yet some improvement can come from conscious attention to the development of the service attitude as such.

*Interest in the Customer.* The second emphasis in a successful contact program is that the contacting employee should at all times be considerate of the point of view of the "customer." When Citizen John Jones comes into the civil service office to find out about the announced examination for truck driver, his is one of a hundred similar inquiries which the employee behind the desk must meet in the course of a week's work. The employee's natural tendency is to treat the request as routine, to hand out an application blank and get it over with as rapidly as possible. To Mr. Jones, however, the matter of the application may well be the most important thing in the world at the moment. It represents a chance to get a job, with all the consequences for his family and himself which a job and its security imply.

Specific suggestions developed by experience in private industry may be of help at this point. These include:

1. Give prompt attention—action as soon as the customer enters the office.
2. Learn to listen—give the customer a chance to tell his story

fully without unnecessary interruption. Attention to this will overcome the common and maddening tendency of the man behind the desk to say in effect, "Skip all that. I know exactly what you want to say—I've heard the same story a hundred times."

3. Avoid reciting rules verbatim in answer to a request. The blunt statement that "You will have to do so-and-so, your case is covered by rule ninety-seven," is a challenge to the citizen's self-esteem. No one likes to be placed in a category and to have his actions arbitrarily determined by an impersonal rule. Least of all is such a statement acceptable from a public employee whom the citizen regards as *his* employee. No rule should be cited without some attempt at explanation of the necessity for the rule and the reasons for its application.

4. Learn to talk naturally at the customer's level. Talking over a person's head or obviously talking down to him are equally obnoxious manifestations of a "high-hat" attitude and should be avoided at all costs.

5. Avoid any word or gesture that would indicate that the matter is of minor importance. The need for caution in this direction is obvious.

6. Be willing to spend a little more time on the matter than is absolutely necessary—letting the customer terminate the interview. This suggestion contradicts, somewhat, the traditional concept of maximum efficiency, but it will pay dividends.

7. Maintain a friendly atmosphere. Friendliness is an intangible concept, but its meaning and importance become clear when contrasted with the irritating, cold formality with which many officials meet the public.

8. Be open-minded in the face of criticism. To revert to the copybook style, a word of explanation is worth a pound of argument.

9. Personalize the contact—simple devices such as occasional use of the customer's name will contribute to this end.

*Adequate Information.* Third, the employee should be able to provide information quickly, clearly, completely, accurately, and concisely. Thus the employee must know the answers to any

questions he is likely to be asked or know exactly where the information can be found. The practice of shunting the information-seeker from one employee to another and from office to office is a common source of irritation. It can be avoided by concentrating the information-giving function and also by requiring that all employees have certain standard information. The various reports previously described will provide a basis for such information. Clearness and conciseness in passing on information involve thorough knowledge of the facts, understanding of the particular problem, and effective use of words. This last element will be discussed in detail subsequently.

Accuracy and completeness of the information given are important from both the technical and public relations point of view. The dangers of handing out misinformation or partial information are obvious. If necessary, the information should be checked and repeated to make sure that the customer understands all important facts. "Completeness of information" may also require an explanation as well as a mere recital of the essential facts.

*Courtesy.* The fourth element of successful contacting is simple politeness. Most people are brought up under constant urging from parents and teachers to use "please" and "thank you." The use of a pleasant greeting and leave-taking, the avoidance of gum chewing, coughing, rudeness, vulgarity, and similar annoyances are so elementary as to seem out of place in a program for adults. Yet surveys have shown widespread neglect of all of these ABC's on the part of employees, with unfortunate results for public relations. Broader considerations of courtesy involve the prompt keeping of appointments, care in the fulfillment of promises, care of others' property, and the like. Broadest of all is general sensitiveness to and consideration for the feelings of others. The most any formal program can hope to do in this direction is to provide a constant reminder of these elementary courtesies plus some direction for their application in specific situations.

*Speech.* A fifth factor making for success in contact situations is the effective use of words. Again the standards are well-known

but need to be stressed. The choice of words is important. Three simple rules for effective speech in handling contacts are:

1. Say it simply—technical jargon and street slang are equally bad.
2. Say it clearly—speak slowly without mumbling.
3. Say it pleasantly—voice pitch, modulation, and loudness must be watched to achieve this end.

*Personal Appearance.* The final factor in creating a favorable impression across the counter is personal appearance. The virtues of the clean collar encircling the well-washed neck have been learned by most people through painful experience at a very early age and do not require elaboration. It is enough to say that such elements do have significance for pleasant contacts; that they are too frequently neglected even in the best of offices; and that they may well be considered with appropriate discretion in any contact improvement program. Closely related matters for consideration include conservatism in dress and make-up; avoidance of possibly annoying personal practices; and general office neatness.

### *Types of Contacts*

So much for our horseback paraphrase of "how to win friends and influence people." The next problem in approaching contact improvement is to analyze the general types of contact situations. These are three: face-to-face contacts; telephone contacts; and correspondence. Each type requires some special adaptation of the general rules just expounded.

Face-to-face contacts break down into three major sub-types: office contacts; contacts on the premises of the customer; and contacts on neutral ground—the street or the examination room, for example. Related to these are the informal, nonofficial contacts of the off-duty employee.

In telephone contacts the element of appearance is absent. Special rules of telephone courtesy have been developed, and will gladly be made available by the local telephone company. Most valuable are the following suggestions:

1. Phones should be answered promptly.

2. A standard way of answering is desirable. "Examinations Division, Smith speaking" is suggested as a time-saving improvement over the traditional "Hello."

3. Calls should not be transferred unless absolutely necessary.

4. Special attention should be paid to voice pitch, speed, and modulation.

5. Callers should not be left "holding the line" for longer than about forty-five seconds. It is better to call back.

6. The caller should be allowed to hang up first, thus avoiding any possibility of a "He cut me off short" complaint.

Effective correspondence practice involves all the basic elements listed above except voice and appearance. Good form and grammar, the avoidance of stylized phrases, and special attention to the personal tone are recommended.<sup>4</sup> A particularly trying practice is the use of printed form letters of the "item checked covers your case" type. They may save time and postage, but they frequently lose friends: Multigraphed form letters carefully drafted are an acceptable compromise where personal answers are impossible. Detailed rules for effective correspondence are set forth in any good secretarial manual. A particularly valuable guidebook for government use is the correspondence manual developed under the Farm Credit Administration and now published by Grady and Hall under the title: *Writing Effective Government Letters*.<sup>5</sup>

### *Analysis of Contact Situations*

With the general principles of effective contact practice in mind, the next step in the development of a thoroughgoing program would be to analyze in detail the contact situations which arise in the agency in question. Such a study would be similar in many respects to the surveys made for a duties classification.

<sup>4</sup>Thus one utility company has developed the following cautions for those who write letters:

1. Remember type is cold and subject to misunderstanding.
2. Say exactly what you mean.
3. Cover unpleasant statements with expressions that soften the blow.
4. Use the same care in expression as you would in face-to-face contacts.
5. Put yourself in the other fellow's place.

<sup>5</sup>May be procured from Employee Training Publications, Box 71, Washington, D. C.

Each job in the agency would be described from a contact viewpoint on a form that contains space for appropriate notations covering each of the following points:<sup>6</sup> (1) Title of position; (2) Occasions for public contacts involved in duties; (3) Best ways to show interest in customer; (4) Correct, understandable answers to questions most frequently asked; (5) Forms of courtesy that are essential; (6) Quality of speech essential—tone, vocabulary, pitch, etc.; and (7) Minimum requirements as to appearance of person, clothing, and equipment.

To make such a survey for an organization of any size is obviously no easy task. However, once done, it will serve as a basis for all work in contact improvement. To get the material essential for such a study, the technique of the classification survey may be used—that is, the employee himself submits the basic statement, for confirmation by his supervisor.

Analysis of the returns will disclose considerable similarity of contact problems among various jobs. Generally, according to Field,<sup>7</sup> the jobs will group themselves into the following classes:

1. Functions with incidental personal contact. For the civil service agency these will include distribution of application blanks and similar routine activities in which no special problems are involved.
2. Functions with major personal contacts, including answering special questions of individuals, monitoring examinations, and the like.
3. Functions with ultra-difficult personal contact, such as handling protests on grades and other complaints and criticisms.
4. One other type of contact which rarely arises in the operations of a personnel agency, but which is frequent in other branches of the public service, is technical or mechanical service with a personal element, such as property inspections, garbage collections, construction and repair projects, etc.

Similarity of requirements will be found within each of these major groups. Thus the contact improvement program can be planned in units corresponding to these groupings.

General standards for effective practice will now have been established. The survey forms will have been analyzed to pro-

<sup>6</sup>Adapted from Field, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

vide a clear picture of the exact nature and location of the agency's contact problems. The next step is to determine the manner and effectiveness of present handling of these problems. Five complementary ways of conducting such a survey are suggested by Field:<sup>8</sup>

a. Newspaper advertisements may be printed inviting suggestions and criticisms;

b. A customer-survey, in which carefully chosen people make personal interviews with all types of customers regarding various features of the agency's service, may be conducted;

c. Questionnaires, worded in such a way as to invite honest comment rather than criticism, may be sent to the customers' homes and offices;

(Likert instruments similar to those described previously for general attitude analysis might be adapted for use with methods a, b, or c, above.)

d. A special group of employees, either on the agency payroll or on that of a private organization, may assume the role of customers and carry on what to all appearances are normal business transactions (service sampling). The interest, speech, politeness, etc. of the employees can be noted on the service sampler's report after each contact.

e. Analysis of complaints and customer comments may be undertaken.

The service sampling method is recommended as the most useful both at this stage and in later attempts to determine the success of the program. Great care should be taken in selecting and training the service samplers. To minimize antagonism, the whole program should be carefully explained to the employees being checked. The results of the survey of present practices should be keyed to the analysis of individual problems previously made and, together with the general principles discussed above, should provide a definite body of material to be used as a basis for the improvement program.

### *Instruction of Employees*

The next problem is to get the program into operation. This involves some means of acquainting the employees actually mak-

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13.

ing contacts with the results of the analysis as well as with sound practices. There are two ways of doing this job: the "pep talk" series, and the contact training conference program.

The "*pep talk*" method is the cheapest, easiest, and quickest way of instructing employees. It involves merely a series of lectures to all or special groups of employees, given by competent persons from inside or outside the agency. Basic principles may be expounded, and illustrations drawn from case histories. While such a method is simple, its effectiveness is open to question. Getting employees to change personal habits—which after all is the objective of the program—is no easy task. Mere oratory or orders will not produce a lasting effect. To be successful such a program must be continued over a long period and must involve active participation on the part of employees. The "pep talk" method lacks both of these essentials and has therefore been abandoned by most business firms in favor of the second method.

The *conference method*, in which small groups of employees get together to discuss their own contact problems, is generally accepted as the best road to improvement. Such conferences have a triple advantage over lectures: they are specific, continuing, and they involve employee participation. It is strongly recommended that such a program be undertaken by government jurisdictions seeking to improve their relations with the public. The program should consist of separate series of conferences for each major type of employees having direct relations with the public. These groupings will be apparent from the survey previously made. Several groups, however, are of special importance.

Foremost among these are employees whose major work is the handling of personal contacts. These include counter clerks, telephone operators, receptionists, and information clerks. Particular attention should also be paid to the training of supervisory officials. Not only should they be required to supervise the public relations activities of their subordinates, but they are in most cases the first line of appeal for all questions or complaints which subordinates themselves cannot satisfactorily handle. Consideration should be given, therefore, to the methods



under which appeals and inquiries may be taken to supervisory officers.

No program of training in public relations can afford to overlook the executives in the government. In addition to their importance as supervisors of the entire program, they have many direct contacts with the public which are of primary importance. Citizens often insist upon taking their complaints directly to the men at the top, and while most such cases could be satisfactorily handled by subordinates, the head must be able, if necessary, to deal diplomatically with them.

Legislators are seldom thought of in connection with training in public relations, but something might be done by indirection to make them aware of this phase of their responsibilities. It is obvious that they cannot be brought together in groups and instructed by administrative personnel. Nevertheless, they may be invited to participate in or attend training programs for administrative personnel. If such cooperation is properly handled, their support may be enlisted for the training program and their attention called to the numerous problems of public relations in which legislative participation is essential.

### *A Suggested Public Contact Training Program*

Specific suggestions have been made by Field for the organization and administration of conference training programs.<sup>9</sup> Several large industrial and utility concerns have followed this program with considerable success.

*Responsibility.* Public relations training should be geared into the general training program of the jurisdiction rather than established separately. In departments such as police and fire, where training is of a specialized and technical character, the responsibility should probably be centered in the department. The role of the personnel agency in the development and coordination of training programs is covered in another report in this series, and will not be touched upon here.<sup>10</sup> But regardless of whether the agency is responsible in any degree for the opera-

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 34-39.

<sup>10</sup>See the report of the Committee on Employee Training in the Public Service.

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tion of a broad training program, attention should certainly be given to the training of its own staff in the art of handling public contacts well.

So far as a broad program of contact training is concerned, a number of points deserve consideration. Department heads may, from time to time, be used as instructors, special lecturers, or discussion group leaders, and certainly their support and active cooperation are needed if the program is to succeed. However, it is believed that much of the responsibility for the program should be vested in the employees themselves. If this policy is accepted, department heads should keep themselves in the background as far as possible.

Another official who might play an important part in setting up the program is the public relations counsel, if there is one. While he should probably not be entrusted with the direction of the program, he should be used as a consultant and occasionally as a special lecturer.

Where strong employee organizations exist, every effort should be made to interest them in active participation. The employees' associations of Los Angeles County and Minneapolis both have taken a marked interest in the subject of public relations and have given considerable prominence in their meetings to methods of improving public contacts.

*Leadership.* Actual leadership of the conference meetings should generally be in the hands of line supervisors who are made directly responsible for carrying out whatever policies are adopted. If their interest is aroused and their leadership invoked, progress would seem to be assured. Preliminary training in conference technique and general supervision should be given conference leaders by the central training agency, and program content and methods determined by a steering committee. The conferences themselves, however, should be in the hands of supervisors who are closest to the workers.

*Number of meetings.* Experience has indicated that from eight to twelve meetings are required for the initiation of the training program, depending on the group involved and the degree of emphasis desired.

The original series of conferences should be followed by periodic or occasional meetings, depending on the character and variety of contacts of any given group and the problems arising in the course of its work. At such meetings new policies and new incidents from the experience of the employees can be canvassed. One utility department of a western city, for instance, has held regular meetings for the past six years and has had no difficulty providing worth-while subjects for discussion.

*Time and length of meetings.* Since such meetings are a definite part of job training and full participation is desired, it is suggested that they be held during working hours if possible. If it is necessary to hold meetings after hours, all employees involved should be required to attend and regular overtime credit should be given. One hour of active discussion is a satisfactory period for these conferences. If they are much longer, interest will wane.

#### *Subject Matter of a Contact Training Program*

All the elements entering into successful contact practice should be covered. Although they have already been specified, they may be summarized at this point by referring to the subjects covered in the training program of a progressive utility company. Included are: personal appearance, speech, courtesy, interest in customer, giving information, telephone contacts, job knowledge, special services, company policy, special jobs, company knowledge, customer's viewpoint, loyalty, final effect on customer, handling complaints, and selling the public.<sup>11</sup> Relative emphasis on the various points as well as the actual content of the discussions will, of course, need to be adjusted to the level and the types of contact problems of each separate group of employees.

Special emphasis on information is called for, however, particularly with regard to the general policies of the administration. If employees are to be successful in explaining, interpreting, and possibly defending the objectives, activities, and procedures of the jurisdiction for which they work, they must them-

<sup>11</sup>Syracuse Lighting Company, personal interview.

selves have a full appreciation of these matters. In answering requests, in handling complaints, and in all contacts with citizens, public employees should be prepared to answer intelligently all manner of questions. Unfortunately, too many public employees have a very limited knowledge of their own government, and this knowledge is frequently confined to the particular task or department to which they are assigned. The average citizen is not very well informed about his government, and he gets little satisfaction when he seeks information from a public employee who refers him to some other person in another department. This does not mean, of course, that every employee must be an encyclopedia of knowledge and be competent to speak authoritatively on all matters concerning the government. Nevertheless, he should have a sound knowledge of the basic program, policies, and procedures of the entire jurisdiction, sufficient to enable him to give at least a general answer to inquiring citizens, and this should be supplemented by a knowledge of exactly where further information can be obtained. This applies particularly, of course, to counter clerks in offices where citizen contacts are an important activity.

The character of the personnel to be found at many reception desks and behind counters in clerical positions often leaves much to be desired. Such positions seem at times to be filled by persons who are not of much use in what are considered to be more responsible posts. Under the conception of public contacts set forth in this section, such officials should be personable, mentally alert, and broadly informed about the work of the organization.

One of the most important phases of training in public relations should be a "know-your-government" program. The organization of the government, the principal activities of the major departments and agencies, some of the major problems and issues confronting each unit, and other allied subjects would provide the subject matter for this part of the training program.

Such a training program, entirely apart from its value in improving public contacts, will aid greatly in building up the

morale of the whole body of workers. When one sees his own job in its proper setting, and the relations of his unit to the department and of the departments to one another, the functions carried on by the individual worker take on a special significance. An orientation program of this type has been tried in Milwaukee, where tours of the various city departments were made and the interrelations of the whole city administration explained. It is reported that this plan met with considerable success.

Once the training program is under way, the problem arises as to what to do with new and untrained employees. If they are hired in large enough numbers, special conferences covering the whole program can be repeated at appropriate intervals. If not, the program should be so arranged that initiates can be included at any point and be brought up to date by a study of the reports of preceding meetings or through a contact manual which might be developed.

### *Checking up on Results*

The final point in the contact improvement program is to check on the results obtained. This can be done through periodic resurveys of contact practices by means of the method used in the preliminary study. If an absolute check is desired, a continuous system of monitoring, similar to that used by the telephone companies, may be instituted. Such a system is probably beyond the scope or needs of any but the largest public agencies having the most constant and serious types of public contact problems.

One further method of contact control remains to be explored. This is the system of planned responses used by some utilities and in many department stores. This consists in making verbatim records of all contact conversations over a period of time and having them analyzed by an expert. Frequently recurring situations are isolated and the most effective responses determined. These are standardized, and employees are required to memorize and use a standard form of greeting and leave-taking and to make the official answers to various questions. This

method might, however, easily lead to undue inflexibility and even to excessive formality. The same ends could be achieved in most cases through the conference technique and generalized contact manual.

The aspect of public relations treated in the foregoing pages has been dealt with at some length because of the extent to which it is ordinarily neglected in the conduct of government. The notion that government is necessarily inefficient, wasteful, and bureaucratic is altogether too prevalent in this country. If a crisis in public affairs ever comes—and many predict that it is on the way—the good will or absence of good will on the part of the public will be a most important factor. One of the most effective methods for building good will is to maintain satisfactory public relations through the manifold personal contacts that take place day by day and hour by hour in every jurisdiction in the country.

## *Chapter XIII*

### **Minor Public Relations Media**

CERTAIN minor public relations media remain to be considered. Though minor in the sense that their use is relatively infrequent and they reach relatively small segments of the agency's publics, when properly used they have much potential value for the program. They include exhibits, tours and demonstrations, and cooperation with the schools.

#### **EXHIBITS**

The exhibit is perhaps the oldest publicity medium. Long before the days of advertising, merchants displayed their wares in the market place. Nowadays such exhibits have a prominent part in the practices of salesmanship. The opportunity to participate in exhibits of one sort or another comes occasionally to any public agency. Periodic fairs and expositions, special civic displays brought together on a large scale or as individual exhibits in commercial show-windows, or display cases in the public libraries or museums—all afford opportunities for arousing interest in one or more functions of government.

Through well-planned exhibits the personnel agency's story may be told to many people in a dramatic and effective way. Best of all they offer a chance to reach people who would be relatively untouched by other forms of publicity. The exhibit has a special asset in that the audience comes to it with an express desire to see what is to be seen. To a great extent, this eliminates the hurdle of attracting attention and interest in the face of manifold competing forces, a distracting element with which other publicity efforts must invariably cope.

Few public personnel agencies have appreciated the value of exhibits. In at least one city, the agency flatly refused to participate in exhibits. In contrast, public agencies with an ad-

vanced concept of public relations not only take advantage of every such opportunity but also seek and make opportunities.

The large exhibit of the New York City Civil Service Commission at the New York World's Fair is an outstanding example of what can be accomplished in the way of attractive exhibits. As already mentioned in an earlier chapter, the exhibit was the scene of a study in popular attitudes toward the merit system. In addition, those who attended the exhibit were given the opportunity to take a sample civil service examination and subsequently see it scored on an electrical scoring machine. A motion picture film showing various kinds of city employees performing their tasks was a part of the exhibit.

In California, the State Personnel Board maintains an exhibit each year at the State Fair. At the 1940 Fair, visitors to the exhibit were offered a chance to test their knowledge of California history through the medium of a brief machine-scored examination, somewhat similar to the one used at the New York City exhibit. Public reaction to the exhibit proved so favorable that the agency later collaborated with the Los Angeles County Civil Service Commission in presenting a similar exhibit at the Los Angeles County Fair.

Other agencies have also used exhibits effectively. The United States Civil Service Commission has recently set up a large permanent exhibit in its Washington Office. The Minnesota and Michigan state civil service agencies and the Indiana Bureau of Personnel have also presented exhibits at one time or another.

#### *Arrangements for Exhibits*

The major work of planning a general exhibit will not always fall to the personnel agency. Generally, it will be only one of many participants in an exhibition planned and run by others. However, suggestions can be given which will aid in intelligent cooperation. To aid in the planning of exhibits and to insure proper cooperation, a special committee should be formed of representatives of all exhibitors. For instance, in planning a general city government exhibition, all major departments or bureaus should be represented in the committee on arrange-



ments. This committee should meet as far as possible in advance of the date the exhibition is to open, to decide upon the general theme, assign space, and allot responsibility for the preparation of the material.

The physical planning and execution of the personnel agency's exhibition should, if possible, be placed in the hands of someone with considerable experience in exhibit techniques. A governmental jurisdiction will have at its disposal the services of qualified persons from the staff of its museum or library. In fact, in any large jurisdiction, almost all of the special services required for an exhibition can be secured from the rolls of regular government employees. Photographers, sign painters, and carpenters can all be found without going beyond the regular government force. Employees will generally lend enthusiastic support to an enterprise of this kind, contributing many hours of their own time if necessary. Incidentally, such group participation in an unusual undertaking is a splendid morale builder. Before any construction is started, all plans for the exhibits should be approved in writing by the management of the exhibition and by the local building and fire prevention officials.

To reduce the cost of preparing new exhibits and to secure exhibits of tested effectiveness, the resources of various federal agencies and national associations of officials should be canvassed for loan materials. The United States Office of Education has exhibits prepared on many subjects. The Department of Justice, the Public Roads Administration, and various divisions of the Department of Agriculture have movies and exhibit materials that can be borrowed. Well conceived civil service displays are, so far as is known, not available. In this connection the Civil Service Assembly or the National Civil Service Reform League might well consider preparing portable exhibit units to be loaned to local agencies.

The success of exhibits is greatly increased if one or more persons are in attendance to explain and interpret them. Ordinarily such persons may be selected from among the regular employees of the participating agencies.

*Content of Exhibits*

An exhibit should tell a coherent story, with a single central theme or thread running through its various parts. This principle should be followed at all levels of planning. For example, if a city is planning a general exposition involving industrial, commercial, cultural, and governmental exhibits, a central theme should be provided toward which all individual displays may be oriented. Such a theme might be, to take an obvious example, "Ten Years of Progress." It will then be up to each individual exhibitor to see that his exhibit contributes something to that theme. Within the main theme it may be decided that the city government exhibits will emphasize "Scientific Methods in Government." This will again limit the scope of the individual planner. Finally, a specific purpose or theme should be selected for each individual display. The civil service commission might decide to present as its theme, "Taking Guesswork out of Public Personnel Practices." Any suggested exhibit materials which do not contribute to this should be put aside. Too frequently the desirability of a central theme is ignored, with the result that the finished exhibition resembles the sort of thing one gets by rapidly turning the dial of the radio.

So far as possible, exhibits should not be confined to a recital of accomplishments or a demonstration of procedures. Difficulties, failures, and problems requiring solution should also be presented. Several themes which might be used by civil service commissions are: "How to Get a City Job"; "Fighting the Spoils System"; "Government and Business Personnel Practices Compared." In general the whole approach to exhibits should be from the point of view of the individual citizen and his contacts with the government.

After the over-all theme and its constituent parts have been determined, the next step is the formulation of detailed outlines by all participating agencies. Only in this way can coherence be assured. Before any particular item is approved for inclusion in the exhibit, it should be checked against the following requirements:

1. Is it in line with and related to the accepted objective?
2. Is it appropriate to the particular audience to which it will be shown? For example, civil service charts, which might be ideal exhibits for a convention of personnel men, would be entirely over the heads of the average visitor to a county fair.
3. Does it try to express too many ideas at once? One idea per exhibit is recommended.
4. Conversely, does the series of exhibits express the same idea too many times? Monotonous repetition may defeat the purpose.
5. Is it in keeping with the general tone of other exhibits at the exposition? Thus, straight facts and figures can be presented in an admittedly educational show. The people who come will expect to be instructed. On the other hand, if the exposition is designed largely for popular appeal, the educational note should be incidental.
6. Is it adapted to the space available?
7. Is it adapted to expression in exhibit form? To meet this requirement the content must lend itself to concrete treatment. The action of somebody or something must be involved. Abstract ideas and relationships can better be presented by other methods.

After checking each individual item, the whole series of exhibits should be reviewed to see that they have continuity; that each adds something to the whole effect; and that there is a flow of ideas from beginning to end.

### *Form of Exhibits*

A casual visitor to the New York or San Francisco World's Fairs would conclude that the variety of exhibit forms is almost infinite. Actually, however, there are about twelve major types, which may, of course, be elaborated and combined in a variety of ways. The basic forms are:

1. Panels—backgrounds or screens which may contain descriptive information or on which other exhibit materials may be mounted.
2. Posters.

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3. Charts, maps, and enlarged pictographs—particularly effective devices.

4. Photographs. These should be 11 x 14" or larger; should contain no irrelevant material; and should never be presented without titles and explanations. The enlarged photo-mural is a very effective exhibit form which can be produced at moderate expense if the personnel agency has access to a well-equipped dark-room.

5. Cartoons, drawings, and the like.

6. Dioramas—three dimensional scenes, sometimes animated. They are an increasingly popular form of exhibit.

7. Motion pictures.

8. Actual objects used in work. The strength testing machines used at the New York Commission's exhibit at the World's Fair are an example.

9. Moving or flashing devices.

10. Demonstrations of processes. The demonstrations should be brief, taking not over ten minutes at the most. They should move rapidly and be adequately explained. Where demonstrations are not continuous, a time schedule showing when they are to be held should be posted conspicuously.

11. Actual performance of duties. Thus a testing laboratory or accounting machines might be operated at the exhibition.

12. Brief talks.

In preparing exhibits, the following cautions should be observed:

1. Don't overcrowd. Whether it be a single panel, a whole booth, or an entire series of exhibits, leave plenty of space, wide margins, and adequate aisles.

2. For each idea that is to be presented, the list of exhibit forms should be reviewed for the purpose of selecting the form of presentation which is best adapted to the subject matter. Due consideration must be given to the relative cost of various forms and to the desirability of variety in the forms used.

3. In general it may be said that the more action there is in an exhibit the better. Best of all is the type of participating exhibit in which the visitor takes a test or pushes a lever. The

New York City Civil Service Commission's exhibit at the World's Fair was almost entirely of the participating type. Its success is attested by the crowds which surrounded it, while other exhibits which gave spectators no opportunity to participate remained almost deserted.

4. All exhibits should be placed within eye range—from 20 inches to 7 feet from the floor.

5. The connection between related exhibits and the separation between unrelated ones should be carefully indicated. Arrows should be used to direct the visitor from one exhibit to the next in logical order. Explanatory signs should be used liberally. As little as possible should be left to the imagination. Adequate guide service is essential in this connection.

6. A final point to be noted is that the visitor will be more apt to remember an exhibit if he is given something to take away with him. A special pamphlet, summarizing what he has seen and directing him to sources of further information, will serve this purpose.

An agency which has frequent opportunities to use exhibits may wish to prepare a ready-to-use exhibit in portable form. A convenient setup for such material is a series of sturdy wall-board panels, hinged and mounted in threes like an ordinary parlor screen. These screens can be painted and lettered, and photographs and charts mounted on them permanently. With such an arrangement the agency will be prepared to present a passable exhibit anywhere on very short notice.

We close this section with the suggestion, already made, that the Civil Service Assembly serve as a clearing house and stimulating center for the development of exhibits that might be used over and over again. A large amount of thought and labor is involved in the preparation of even a comparatively simple exhibit. Under the leadership of the Assembly's secretariat, exhibits prepared by any jurisdiction might readily be made available to other agencies interested in this type of public appeal. At least a detailed description of all exhibits could be filed with the secretariat so that fruitful ideas for various types of exhibits might be generally available.

## TOURS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

The exhibit presents a cross section of selected aspects of the agency and its activities, while tours and demonstrations show the agency actually at work. The latter involve taking groups of people through the agency offices during regular business hours. Such tours, properly conducted, can be extremely effective from the public relations viewpoint. Groups for which such tours can be profitably used include newly elected legislators, newly appointed line officials, new employees, civic and women's clubs, and school classes in civics.

The approach of the agency to such tours should be positive; that is, the agency should solicit the groups rather than wait for them to take the initiative. A general letter from the agency offering such an opportunity will be welcomed in many quarters. Of course the public relations value of such tours must be weighed against the disruption of office routine which they inevitably cause. Discretion can be used in limiting the number of tours and the size of the groups, and scheduling them for Saturday morning or some other time when the office routine will be least disrupted.

Tour groups should consist of no more than twenty people, and should be conducted by a competent guide, preferably by the head of the agency himself if he finds it possible to assume this responsibility. The work of the agency should be presented in logical order—starting, for example, with the application section and ending with a brief description of the retirement system of the jurisdiction.

Many municipalities have concentrated all their efforts along this line into an annual "open house" lasting two or three days. Invitations to visit the government offices are issued to all citizens. Special displays and exhibits are prepared and a general holiday spirit prevails. These occasions have been well attended and generally successful. Besides such more or less formal tours, one person should be given the responsibility of conducting interested visitors through the agency's offices whenever the opportunity presents itself.

## COOPERATION WITH SCHOOLS

The relations between the personnel agency and colleges, technical and high schools will be discussed from a recruitment angle in a companion report in this series.<sup>1</sup> The schools as a "public" have been discussed in a previous chapter. Here we are concerned with the development of a broad interest in personnel work among school children. Most modern school curricula, from the primary grades up, are increasingly emphasizing training for citizenship. More and more realistic information on governmental activities and processes is being taught. However, teachers are frequently handicapped by a lack of suitable materials for instructional purposes. Progressive teachers, therefore, will welcome whatever the public agency may supply to fill this gap. In turn, the agency will profit by telling its story to the citizens of the future while they are still in a formative stage.

The points at which the public agency can cooperate with the schools include curriculum building, supplying study materials and guest lecturers, and arranging for visits to the city hall, the state house, or the national capitol. Most civics curricula are now in a state of flux. A suggestion from the head of the civil service agency to the proper person in the school system may result in the inclusion of the civil service as a study unit in the regular high school course.

The North Central Association of Schools and Colleges, through its Committee on Experimental Units, has recently outlined a well articulated study unit on civil service.<sup>2</sup> The second in a series of experimental units aiming to give "high school pupils a faithful picture of the way our American Government operates,"<sup>3</sup> the unit is designed for a three or four weeks' period in the eleventh or twelfth grades. The personnel agency would do well to bring this volume to the attention of local school teachers.

<sup>1</sup>See the report of the Committee on Positive Recruitment.

<sup>2</sup>Chester Carrothers, *Civil Service* (New York: 1939).

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. iv.



Once the schools recognize civil service as a proper part of a well-rounded curriculum, the personnel agency can cooperate further by supplying study materials. Most of the nontechnical publications previously described will be useful for this purpose, and special pamphlets, keyed directly to the study unit, may be prepared as well. Exhibit materials, movies, and slides may also be submitted. In at least one instance, municipal radio programs have been put on phonograph records for use in civics classes. An excellent ending for the period of classroom study may be provided by a visit to the agency's offices for a tour of inspection.

The appearance of a representative of the personnel agency before selected classes or the school assembly as a whole will provide a valuable supplement to written study material. Certainly at least one talk should be given to each high school graduating class on career opportunities in the public service. On this policy a former Chief Examiner of the Phoenix, Arizona, Civil Service Board reports:<sup>4</sup>

I have spoken to the graduating class in . . . high schools on careers in the public service. In these talks I have demonstrated the classification plan and position specifications and specific cases in our service which have developed into public service careers. Talks have also been given to . . . college classes in public administration.

The executive officer of the California State Personnel Board has conducted a seminar in public personnel administration at the University of California for a number of years.

The problem of coordinating civil service examinations with school curricula will be covered in some detail in another of the reports embraced in this study.<sup>5</sup> The lack of such coordination, which has so long handicapped the civil service in this country, may have strong negative implications for public relations. This was evidenced recently in an eastern city when all but 28 out of 283 applicants failed a test for junior typists. Among those who failed were leading graduates of commercial courses in the local high schools, and as a result, strong protests were lodged

<sup>4</sup>Personal letter from Emil Wachtel, April 25, 1939.

<sup>5</sup>The report of the Committee on Positive Recruitment.



with the personnel agency, particularly from school teachers who regarded the failure of their graduates as a reflection on the caliber of their teaching. As a result of the protests a committee of school principals was appointed to investigate the fairness of the examination. Their report was generally favorable to the commission, but at the same time stressed the need for greater cooperation between the schools and the agency in determining recruiting standards.

### *Cooperation in Curriculum Development*

An even more intensive form of cooperation between the personnel agency and the schools and colleges is found in the development of special courses to fit students for specific civil service jobs. Thus the San Francisco Junior College, with the assistance and support of the San Francisco Civil Service Commission, is beginning two-year courses to fit students for the police and fire services, and is planning other courses dealing with inspectional service and recreation, as well as general government office work. Reporting on the objectives of these programs, the Commission's executive officer says:<sup>6</sup>

First, these courses will offer a channel through which the young people of San Francisco with a proper background of training and education may be brought into the public service. Secondly, it will bring those students who do not enter the public service a better understanding of the problems of government and will make better citizens of them. . . . We believe that this program, carried on at junior college level, will benefit the service as well as provide a more direct method of entry into a life work.

Similar special courses are being offered at the four municipal colleges maintained by New York City. In November, 1938, the New York City Board of Higher Education launched a broad policy involving the reorientation of the liberal arts curriculum in the direction of the public service. Without sacrificing the values of a broad education, it is planned to lay the groundwork and provide the stimulation for selecting the public service as a career.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Personal letter from W. L. Henderson, May 16, 1939.

<sup>7</sup>Personal communication from Commissioner Wallace Sayre, June, 1939.

The increasing attention being given to vocational and trade school training by school boards affords the personnel agency an opportunity to present its case. If the schools are to be more generally utilized in preparing young people for specific trades, they should surely give consideration to their possible contributions in training for public employment. In this matter the personnel agency is the proper and qualified spokesman for the government as a large employer. This observation applies not only to the secondary, but also to the college and graduate levels.

So-called "cram" schools offer a special problem in public relations. While some serve a legitimate purpose, many such schools prey on gullible candidates for public employment and seriously interfere with the selection process. Some personnel agencies, notably the United States Civil Service Commission, have taken positive steps to discourage applicants from enrolling in such schools. A minimum requirement would certainly prescribe that the agency show no favoritism to such schools in making available unpublished examinations or in any other way. The agency should also make it clear to all candidates that training in cramming schools is neither necessary nor desirable.

The public schools are well worth cultivating both as potential sources of recruits and as a foundation for moral support and understanding in future generations. Civics teachers and those serving in vocational guidance positions have many interests in common with members of a public personnel staff. If our impressions are reliable, the latter have generally failed to cultivate the cooperation of the members of the teaching profession.

## *Chapter XIV*

### **Conclusions**

**T**HE preceding chapters have described the approach to an effective public relations program through analyses of the "publics" with which an agency deals, suggested an organizational arrangement for public relations functions, and drawn in broad outline the scope of a standardized informational base. Part II has presented detailed suggestions for the use of various media to effectuate a sound public relations program.

The scope of the program of public relations described is so comprehensive as probably to preclude its full use by any single agency. Certainly none but the largest will have the occasion, staff, or money necessary to develop the program described in all of its ramifications.

Public relations, however, is not an "all or none" function. Each individual agency can pick and choose from the catalog of public relations practices those policies and devices for which it has need and which it can afford to undertake. Assurance may be given that whatever it does, and does well, will produce returns far greater than the money and effort involved.

To aid decision as to the suitable scope of a public relations program for a small or large municipality, a state and a departmental personnel agency, a table is presented in Appendix C. This is submitted merely for its suggestive value to those interested in developing a public relations policy. It is recognized that the character and size of staff, amount of appropriations, and a variety of local conditions must necessarily be taken into account in applying the suggestions to any given jurisdiction.

#### **EMPHASIS ON BROAD VIEWPOINT**

As one reviews the coverage of this report, he cannot but be impressed with the fact that the Committee has conceived of

public relations under the broadest possible definition. There will doubtless be some who will take exception to this breadth of treatment. They may argue that we have dealt here, not with *public* relations, but rather with *human* relations, which naturally include public relations. There is merit in this argument. In reply we would say that one would have to search far to bring together discussions of certain features here covered, and that such features, although not public relations as ordinarily defined, are very important in the everyday administration of a public personnel agency.

#### THE "TWO-WAY STREET"

In conclusion we would emphasize again a consideration that has been brought into our discussion at several points. It is basic not only for the treatment of our subject but for government in all of its ramifications. It is that the ultimate criterion of the success of any government is its acceptance by the public. It is the function of public relations (1) to make the public aware of what the government is doing in terms which the public can understand, and (2) to make governmental officials aware of what the public's response is to the service rendered. This program calls for what has been termed the "two-way street." It involves, on the one hand, continuous understanding on the part of the personnel agency, and, on the other, continuous criticism on the part of the public. Only through such a mutual exchange can government be maintained on a truly democratic basis and the dangers of a self-sufficient bureaucracy be avoided.

A well organized system of public relations working toward these objectives is demanded today as never before. Who will dispute that all types of government are confronted with a crisis in this uncertain period? The future is fraught with the unpredictable. Government has become easily the primary factor in present-day society, even in nontotalitarian countries. If it is to maintain democratic standards it must be continuously responsive to the public will. Hence, public relations today assume an unprecedented significance, difficult to overstate.

As one views the governmental scene in almost any quarter, he finds a widespread indifference to, if not neglect of, a systematic and up-to-date public relations policy. This applies to personnel agencies as well as to practically every other branch of government. As a class, only the city managers have seriously come to grips with this problem. They have developed policies and techniques that are worthy of emulation.

In the opinion of those writing this report, the personnel agency has special reasons for cultivating satisfactory public relations. Its primary job is that of recruiting. It draws heavily on every employment market in the country. What the public knows about and thinks of government will facilitate or complicate the recruiting task and all other employment policies and practices. Is the government a good employer? is a question raised in the mind of every prospective candidate, and it is the function of the personnel division not only to contribute to the improvement of employment policies, but to see that the public has the information required for an affirmative answer to that question.

The committee submits this report in the hope that personnel officials will look upon good public relations as one of the most important of their responsibilities and will provide for a more systematic handling of its possibilities.



## **Appendices**





## *Appendix A*

### **An Information Base for Public Reporting**

ONE of the chapters of the Committee's report has been devoted to a discussion of an important step toward the improvement of public reporting practice of public personnel agencies—the development of a standard base of data as a medium for portraying the activities of the agency. The development of such a base assumes that the items to be included share to a reasonable degree the following characteristics: (1) they are valid and significant indices, either quantitatively or qualitatively, of the agency's activities; (2) they are, or can be made to be, of interest to the reader; and (3) they can be obtained from records and other sources without an unjustifiable expenditure of time and funds.

As a starting point toward shaping such an information base, a study was undertaken by the Committee to segregate the items that meet the first of these criteria, i. e., items having a relatively high value as media for diagnosing the effectiveness of the personnel agency's program. The steps in this study may be summarized as follows:

1. An extensive list was prepared, containing descriptions of items hypothetically reportable. For the most part, these items were taken from annual and other reports of various personnel agencies.

2. The list was circulated among a selected group of personnel practitioners and authorities on government reporting, with the request that each individual appraise each item in terms of its diagnostic value. Each item was followed by a rating scale on which the person's opinion was expressed. The following example illustrates the format of the schedule.

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Reportable Items	Grades of Diagnostic Value									
Rate of employee turnover	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 10
Names and addresses of all employees	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 10

3. An analysis of the rated lists was made to determine the consensus on each of the various items.<sup>1</sup>

The list of items was accompanied by the following message to those participating in the study:

### POOLING OF PROFESSIONAL UNDERSTANDING AS TO DIAGNOSTIC VALUE OF DATA ON CIVIL SERVICE

#### *Explanation*

Below is one section of three which comprise a fairly complete list of all items of information which arise from activities of civil service agencies. The list has been obtained by thorough canvass of personnel reports of various types and suggestions made by committees and authorities in the field.

On the basis of experience, personnel authorities have learned that some of these data are highly important for diagnosing or appraising the effectiveness or efficiency of a personnel agency; while other data are less valuable, or are of little or no value at all for such purposes. Thus we are particularly interested here in the variations of "diagnostic value" of the several items in the list.

*Diagnostic value* should be quite understandable to a profession vitally concerned with operation, criticism or evaluation of government. Thus, an item having *very highest diagnostic value* is one that is most crucial, most significant, most illuminating for any diagnosis or understanding of an agency and its work. It is one of the first things you would wish to know were you appraising, judging, evaluating, or trying "to get a line on" the effectiveness or efficiency of an agency. It is the sort of item which is a good index of the effectiveness of a personnel agency, since it provides a means for differentiating between a successful and an unsuccessful agency. On the other hand, an item of information having *little or no diagnostic value* is one that is of little or no use for any diagnosis since it reveals little about an agency and its work.

<sup>1</sup>This analysis included both a determination of the average rating of diagnostic value for each item and a statistical determination of the extent to which the raters agreed or disagreed with one another in their appraisal of each item. Thus, the average rating of an item upon which there is close agreement among raters is of considerably greater significance than one in which the individual ratings are spread over a comparatively wide range. In more technical language, the procedure used was the psychophysical method of scale building known as the "method of equal-appearing intervals." This is the method employed by Beyle and Kingsley in their *New Employee Evaluation Scale* (1935).

Clearly there are *gradations of diagnostic value*. Every time you start skipping through a personnel report you are operating on some such basis. You may not have formulated your understanding as to gradations of value for diagnosis, and certainly the profession collectively has not done so.

If you, as a part of a "wrenching sample" of informed personnel people will rate the several items in the following list according to the directions given below, we can determine the gradation, sharpness, and stability of professional understanding as to the diagnostic value of those items. As a *quid pro quo* for your time and care, we will be glad to give you a full report on the outcome of the investigation.

We have been able to cut down the very long list of items by ignoring the many statistical and graphic ways in which the substance of any one item could be presented. Substance rather than presentation is our real center of interest at this time. So when an item statement mentions such a term as "average," please do not become involved in the relative merits of different forms of averages such as median, mode or arithmetic mean. Such considerations are very well understood already. But it is needful to discover the varying values of different items of substance.

#### *Directions*

You are asked to give *Your Own Judgment* as to the *Diagnostic Value* of the substantive items listed below. Please do not worry about some one else's opinion or interest, for our wrenching sample will take care of that. Please record your judgments in the following way.

To the right of each item are eleven numbers representing various degrees of diagnostic value. The number 0 means "no diagnostic value at all." The number 1 means "the very slightest diagnostic value." The number 10 means "the very highest diagnostic value." And the numbers 2 to 9 mean even gradations of diagnostic value between these extremes.

With this scheme of rating in mind, please read each item and for each item encircle the number at the right of it which *you think* best represents its degree of diagnostic value. If you use a pencil to encircle the numbers, you will be able to revise your first judgments where necessary. Do not leave any doubt, however, as to your final judgments, and encircle only one number for each item.

#### *Classificatory Data*

Please give the following general information about yourself by checking in the appropriate squares.

1. I am in the employment of a
  - ☐ Civil service agency
  - ☐ Government agency served by a civil service agency
  - ☐ Civic, labor, business, or professional organization interested in civil service
2. My work involves:
  - ☐ Supervision of others
  - ☐ Supervision by others

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## SUMMARY OF DIAGNOSTIC RATINGS

As a result of the study, a list has been prepared, containing in approximate rank order the reportable items appraised as possessing an appreciable amount of diagnostic value. This list, reproduced hereafter, shows for each item its "diagnostic value" rating (DV) and its "ambiguity value" index (A).<sup>2</sup>

REPORTABLE MATTERS RESPECTING CIVIL SERVICE IN ORDER OF  
DIAGNOSTIC VALUE AND AGREEMENT ON DIAGNOSTIC VALUE

DV	A	Reportable Item
8.8	1.8	Indices of reliability and validity of tests used
8.0	2.7	Amount of statistical analysis of examination results undertaken
8.0	3.2	Total finances and expenditure of personnel agency
7.9	2.6	Percentage of provisional appointees working beyond legal limits
7.9	2.7	Ratio of number of provisional appointments to total number of appointments
7.9	3.1	General discussion of relationship between open competitive examination grades and later success on the job
7.8	2.2	Correlation of promotion examination results with subsequent service ratings

<sup>2</sup>In interpreting the values shown, the reader should recall the sample of the appraisal scale appearing on a preceding page in this Appendix. Thus the maximum average rating of "diagnostic value" would be 10. The "ambiguity value" index, on the other hand, is in inverse relation to the amount of agreement among raters. The lower the index for a particular item, the higher is the agreement among raters in their consensus concerning the diagnostic value of that item. Complete agreement would be indicated by an "ambiguity value" of zero. Only those items have been listed which have a diagnostic value of 5.6 or more, and an ambiguity value of 3.4 or less.

For those who are familiar with psychophysical methods of scale building, it should be pointed out that these two measures are the standard measures derived by the "method of equal-appearing intervals." Thus the "scale position" becomes "diagnostic value" in this case, and the inter-quartile range or "ambiguity value" really becomes a measure of expert agreement.

DV	A	Reportable Item
7.6	3.1	Summary of unusual developments or improvements in examination techniques
7.5	2.4	Organization of personnel agency, giving division and functions
7.4	2.0	Ratio of number of ratings revised by the commission to the number appealed
7.4	2.5	Ratio of number of vacancies filled by promotion after examination to total number filled
7.4	2.6	General discussion of major personnel projects in process or planned for future action
7.4	2.6	Ratio of number of provisional appointments made permanent to the total number of appointments
7.3	2.3	Ratio of number of temporary appointments to total number of appointments
7.3	2.7	Percentage distribution of costs of personnel agency by major activities
7.3	2.7	Cost per candidate of examination services
7.3	2.8	Number and types of employees over which personnel agency gained or lost jurisdiction during period, analyzed by reasons for change
7.3	3.1	Percentage of appointments to higher positions filled by promotion from the ranks
7.2	2.4	Percentage of present employees that have received their positions through non-permanent appointments broken down into: a. Provisional; b. Temporary; c. Seasonal; d. Emergency
7.2	2.4	Probationers discharged (Per cent)
7.2	2.6	Analysis of permanent employees in service by methods of gaining present status showing number and per cent which were blanketed into civil service
7.2	3.0	Ratio of number of temporary appointments made from eligible lists to total number of temporary appointments
7.2	3.1	Ratio of total number of positions compensated under standardized scale to total number of positions subject to jurisdiction of the personnel agency
7.2	3.2	Unit costs of personnel agency per person appointed
7.1	3.0	Ratio of number of waivers to total number of appointments
7.1	3.1	Unit costs of personnel agency per person examined
7.1	3.1	Percentage of requests for certification filled from available lists
7.0	1.9	Accident rate for employees in service

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DV	A	Reportable Item
7.0	2.0	Ratio of number of employees eligible to compete in promotional examination to the number who actually did compete
7.0	2.0	Per cent of eligible employees competing in each promotional examination
7.0	2.0	Ratio of number of efficiency ratings appealed to the commission to the total number of ratings made
7.0	2.3	Separations classified by voluntary and involuntary
7.0	2.4	Per cent of total employees receiving service ratings
7.0	2.7	Finances of retirement fund, showing: a. Balance in fund at beginning of period; b. Receipts during period; c. Disbursements during period; d. Balance in fund at end of period
7.0	2.9	Analysis of appeals from examination grades, showing number granted
7.0	3.4	Average number of days persons examined waited for results
6.9	2.2	Injuries in line of duty, by departments (Number per 100 employees)
6.9	3.2	General discussion of aspects of personnel work which have received major concentration of agency attention during period
6.9	3.2	Analysis of service ratings by departments, showing percentage distribution of ratings for each department and totals
6.8	2.3	Analysis of permanent employees in service by methods of gaining present status showing number and per cent which were held over from temporary job
6.8	2.4	Percentage of regular employees under retirement plan according to classes and titles
6.8	2.4	Turnover rate for each major class of employees
6.8	2.7	Ratio of number of waivers of those on promotion eligible lists to total number on such lists
6.8	2.8	Ratio of number of separations to total number of employees
6.8	3.0	Ratio of number of dismissals to total number of employees
6.8	3.3	Per-employee costs of various aspects of personnel program
6.8	3.3	Description of significant changes in rules or policies of personnel agency during period
6.7	2.4	General discussion of conditions of cooperation between personnel agency and operating departments

DV	A	Reportable Item
6.7	2.6	Analysis of permanent employees in service by methods of gaining present status showing number and per cent who entered present positions by transfer or reinstatement
6.7	2.8	Per cent of incumbent employees meeting standards of qualifying examinations
6.7	2.8	Ratio of number passing promotional examinations to total number taking them
6.7	2.9	Analysis of permanent employees in service by methods of gaining present status showing number and per cent which received exempt appointments
6.7	3.2	General discussion of efforts to train operating supervisors for personnel responsibilities
6.7	3.4	Description of special non-competitive appointments made showing person appointed and reason for exemption
6.7	3.4	Provisional appointments classified by cause
6.6	2.4	Hours of overtime per employee, by departments
6.6	2.7	General discussion of present state of relationships between personnel agency and employees in the service
6.6	2.8	Analysis of permanent employees in service by methods of gaining present status showing number and per cent which received appointment by certification from an eligible list
6.6	3.0	Percentage of provisional appointments renewed
6.6	3.2	Percentage total expenditures of personnel agency are of total payroll for classified employees
6.6	3.3	Analysis of appeals from examination grades, showing number of appeals by type of test
6.6	3.4	Number of provisional appointments disapproved by personnel agency
6.5	2.6	Total and per-employee value of overtime service
6.5	3.4	Expenditures by functions
6.5	3.4	Unit costs of personnel agency per person passed
6.4	2.7	Ratio of number of promotional examinations given to total number of examinations
6.4	3.0	Analysis of examinations and results by major occupational classes, showing for each service per cent passed
6.4	3.2	General discussion of trend of work of personnel agency
6.4	3.2	Hours of in-service training per employee
6.3	2.3	Average monthly turnover rate by causes
6.3	2.4	Injuries in line of duty, by departments, showing days lost per employee

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DV	A	Reportable Item
6.3	2.4	Percentage sick leave costs are of total payroll
6.2	2.4	Frequency with which eligible lists of various types are renewed
6.2	2.5	Illustrations of new and valuable forms which have been put into use during period
6.2	2.7	Production records of clerical and labor employees
6.2	3.0	Ratio of total number of applicants passing examinations to total number trying them
6.2	3.4	Ratio of number of decisions upholding the commission in cases appealed to the courts to the number of decisions reversing the commission
6.1	3.0	Ratio of number of sick leaves checked upon through medical or nurse service to total number of sick leaves
6.0	3.3	General discussion of changes in organization and function of personnel agency
6.0	3.3	Number of provisional appointees failing to qualify in examinations
6.0	3.4	General discussion of satisfactoriness and thoroughness of investigation of applicants
5.9	2.8	General discussion of extent to which efforts are made to estimate future personnel requirements
5.8	2.8	Number of employees retained beyond retirement age
5.8	3.0	Analysis of time distribution by various types of employees of the personnel agency, showing for each class (professional, clerical, etc.) number and per cent of man-hours spent on different types of work
5.6	2.4	Frequency of revision of rules and regulations
5.6	2.6	Per cent of total personnel expenditures going into payments for pensions and gratuities
5.6	2.7	Number of efficiency ratings per classified employee during period
5.6	2.7	Analysis of hours spent on various aspects of special studies made
5.6	2.8	Number of employees reinstated by courts after having been discharged



## *Appendix B*

### **Citizen Reaction to Personnel Reporting and Operations in Cincinnati**

ONE of the most important and most neglected features in programs of public reporting and public relations is a systematic sounding of citizen reaction to reports and publicity, as well as to the public service on the personnel side. In the thought that this proposition might be clarified and fortified most effectively by demonstration, arrangements were made with the Civil Service Commission of Cincinnati to cooperate in a demonstration having particular reference to personnel reporting and operation.<sup>1</sup> Cincinnati was chosen because it had recently circulated its annual report for 1938 and because the recent personnel report for that city is one of the better departmental publications designed for public as well as professional consumption. Furthermore, the Cincinnati personnel authorities were glad to cooperate in this undertaking.

The authors of this survey urge that it be looked upon as an initial demonstration. It is the first attempt to check upon citizen reaction to a governmental report, undertaken both as a survey of response to reporting and as a basis of public relations work by governmental officials.<sup>2</sup> Because of the limited time at the disposal of the investigators and the limited coverage, the conclusions drawn must be considered as highly tentative, although they do offer fairly pointed suggestions for governmental publicity and public relations work in Cincinnati. It is believed, also, that the instruments used in the investigation have considerable validity and that the methods followed will have a fair

<sup>1</sup>This investigation was carried on for the Committee under the auspices of the Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

<sup>2</sup>The earlier attempt to check upon the reception of the *Story of the Year*, the Syracuse report for 1928, was negated when that document was held back for use in a municipal political campaign.

amount of suggestive value. Similar analyses could be made elsewhere with increasing improvements of methods and findings.

In closing this introductory statement attention may well be called to the importance of sounding out public opinion concerning attitudes toward matters of policy and procedure of public agencies, in order that those who are responsible for the formulation of such policies and procedures may become acquainted with fallacious attitudes, with matters on which various publics are, but should not be, ignorant, as well as with ill-founded prejudices. The discovery of such opinions and beliefs may well have a marked influence not alone on the contents of future reports and releases of one sort or another, but also on the behavior of the civil servants in dealing with the public served. Public impressions which seem unfounded may have some partial basis in unnecessary friction or grievance which can be remedied or obviated. Thus attitude surveys can become important tools of the administrator serving in a democracy.

#### THE CANVASS OF OPINION

##### *The Department's Report and Mailing List*

The report, reception of which was checked upon in this study, is the *Synopsis of Activities, Department of Personnel and Civil Service Commission*, issued by the City of Cincinnati for the year 1938. It is a twenty-one page mimeographed publication designed principally for the personnel management profession, but prepared simply and graphically so as to catch some popular attention. The report was mailed during the month of January, 1939, to twenty-two civil service agencies, twenty-eight universities, eighteen libraries, twelve staff agencies, forty-two individuals and fourteen associations and clubs in the city, and to three private individuals outside Cincinnati.

At the outset of the canvass in May, 1939, it was thought advisable to extend the list of report readers. Consequently, forty additional copies of the publication were mailed to Cincinnati citizens who had not previously received it but who were on the mailing list for receipt of the civil service bulletins

of the city. A few additional copies were placed at various centers such as the Young Men's Christian Association and the office of the League of Women Voters.

Among the local residents included in the Department's mailing lists there are a few who designate their party preference as "Democrat" or "Republican." For the most part, however, they are those who declare their party preference as "Charter," "Independent," "Charter-Democrat," "Charter-Republican," "Nonpartisan," or the like. And with only three exceptions, they are those who were found to be favorably disposed, in some degree, toward the merit system. It would seem that the mailing lists should be extended to include more of those whose attitudes might be influenced to the advantage of the city and its personnel department.

### *Instruments Used in the Survey*

The canvass of citizen attitude and information was confined entirely to the local residents.<sup>3</sup> The instruments used in the canvass to record opinion about the report, to elicit attitudes and to test information about the civil service as operative in Cincinnati, and to secure suggestions as to desirable publicity are presented at the end of this paper. Forms A, C, and E were used for the collection of opinion and suggestion respecting the report and other possible media of publicity, while Forms B and D were employed for the canvass of attitude toward and test of information about the local civil service system.

*Form A* (Figure 4) was used to measure favor-disfavor toward the report itself and to discover what features of the reporting were particularly liked or disliked. The thirteen statements for possible endorsement constitute a tested psychophysical scale.<sup>4</sup> Measurements derived from use of this instrument amount to

<sup>3</sup>The study was conducted by Elliott S. Wingert during the last of May, 1939. Advice and guidance were given by John A. Lentz and Walter V. Majowski of the Cincinnati Personnel Department and by Robert L. Oshins, Dean William E. Mosher and Professor Herman C. Beyle of the Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

<sup>4</sup>See H. C. Beyle, "Checking Response to Municipal Publicity," *Public Management* (June, 1936), pp. 163-66; and J. T. Barton, *Municipal Public Reporting in Texas* (University of Texas: 1936), pp. 89-90.

**What Do You Think of the  
Latest Civil Service Report of the City of Cincinnati?**

Please check THE statement or statements which BEST REPRESENT YOUR OPINION.

- ☐ 1. I threw it in the wastebasket at once.
- ☐ 2. I couldn't stop reading it until I finished the last page.
- ☐ 3. It didn't impress me one way or another.
- ☐ 4. It has little merit.
- ☐ 5. I am encouraging others to read it.
- ☐ 6. It takes too long to read.
- ☐ 7. It contains interesting information.
- ☐ 8. It is so poorly presented I could make nothing of it.
- ☐ 9. It is the most reliable information available.
- ☐ 10. It has a few good points.
- ☐ 11. I particularly like certain features of it.
- ☐ 12. I didn't like certain features of it.
- ☐ 13. There are other matters which are more important.

What things about the report did you

DISLIKE?

LIKE?

- 
- 1. What would you throw out of the report?
  - 2. What isn't in the report that you would like to see there?
  - 3. What did you do with the report when you finished reading it?
  - 4. Have you had occasion to refer to the report since reading it?
  - 5. From what other sources have you gained information about the Civil Service Commission?

FIGURE 4, FORM A

### What is Your Opinion of the Civil Service System of the City of Cincinnati?

Opposite each of the following statements put one cross (X), marking it in the square under that heading which most nearly represents your opinion.

Decidedly Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Undecided or Don't Know	Tend to Agree	Decidedly Agree	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. The efficiency of city employees is maintained at a high level.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. The personnel agency spends too much money for the results obtained.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. A high degree of morale is maintained among the employees.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. There is too much red tape.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. There are no politics and favoritism in city jobs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. City jobs are so secure that there is little incentive to do good work.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. An attractive career in the public service is offered to young people.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. The examinations are not practically related to the duties of a job.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. The personnel agency gives too much attention to functions other than examining.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. War Veterans are not given enough preference for city jobs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11. Citizens are kept informed of the work done by the Civil Service Commission.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12. Most city employees are paid too much money for the work they do.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13. Too many outsiders are given jobs that should go to local residents.

*Do not sign your name.* We wish your reply to be absolutely frank. But it would help us analyze the returns, if you would give the following *general* information about yourself:

Sex:            Male ☐            Female ☐

Age:            21-34 ☐            35-54 ☐            55 or over ☐

Local party preference: Democrat ☐ Republican ☐ Charter ☐ Other ☐

Residence: \_\_\_\_\_ (Designate ward only)

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you.

FIGURE 5, FORM B

"over-all" scores which can be conveniently used in comparison with other similarly rated reports. Incidentally, this is the first instance of the rating of a report by the actual readers for whom it was prepared. These measurements, in instances where a larger sampling of readers is attempted, could also be conveniently used for comparison of attitude among different groupings within the sample.

*Form B* (Figure 5) dealt with attitudes toward the civil service system rather than toward the civil service report. It was used to measure favor-disfavor toward various features of the civil service system of the City of Cincinnati and toward the local system generally.<sup>5</sup> It is a scoring schedule founded on the "raw scoring" rather than the unusable "sigma scoring" method suggested by Likert.<sup>6</sup> This form was more widely distributed than Forms A and C since it could be presented to others than those on the mailing list for receipt of reports. Consequently, it carried the necessary questions for classification of citizens polled.

*Form C* (Figure 6) was added to secure as much detailed comment on the report as possible. Doubtless it follows too closely the features of reporting which Ridley has declared to be of less significance than the matter of report content.<sup>7</sup> Considerable information as to content approved or needed was gained, however, by marginal free comment and by responses to Forms A and B.

*Form D* (Figure 7) is a brief quiz on key items of information about the local civil service system which had been presented or stressed in the personnel report. It was designed for scoring in terms of gradation of approximation to accuracy of information rather than in terms of true versus false knowledge or impression. In scoring the examination, each step either way from

<sup>5</sup>An improved adaptation of this form was used at the New York World's Fair with the cooperation of the New York Civil Service Commission, the Test Scoring Machine Division of the International Business Machines Company, the Civil Service Assembly, and the Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. The improved form is presented as Figure 9 in Appendix E.

<sup>6</sup>See R. Likert, "A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes," *Archives of Psychology*, No. 140 (1932).

<sup>7</sup>See C. E. Ridley, "Annual Appraisal of Municipal Reports," *National Municipal Review*, January 1937, pp. 34-35.

**What Is Your Opinion of the  
Following Features of the Recent Report of the  
Civil Service Commission of Cincinnati?**

PLEASE CHECK

OTHER COMMENT

**A. Appearance**

1. COVER: attractive ☐ dull ☐ suitable ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
2. GENERAL: attractive ☐ dull ☐ satisfactory ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
3. QUALITY: economical ☐ too cheap ☐ elaborate ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Form**

1. SIZE: convenient ☐ inconvenient ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
2. LENGTH: too long ☐ too short ☐ proper ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
3. PRINTING METHOD:  
mimeograph O.K. ☐ should be printed ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Presentation**

1. STYLE: forceful ☐ clear ☐ involved ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
2. READING MATTER: about enough ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
too much ☐ too little ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
3. DIAGRAMS: accurate ☐ inaccurate ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
simple ☐ involved ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
Order of preference: (mark 1, 2, 3, 4)  
bar charts ☐ pie charts ☐  
picture charts ☐ flow charts ☐
4. TABLES: useful ☐ hard to understand ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
well-presented ☐
5. ILLUSTRATIONS: unnecessary ☐ attractive ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Content**

1. COVERAGE: too detailed ☐ satisfactory ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
too general ☐
2. BALANCE: wrong emphasis ☐ proper emphasis ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
3. TONE: one-sided ☐ fair presentation ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

FIGURE 6, FORM C

**Which of the Following Figures  
Do You Think Are Approximately Correct?**

(Check one in each series)

1. The City Government of Cincinnati spends annually on wages and salaries  
\$4,500,000    \$5,500,000    \$6,500,000    \$7,500,000    \$8,500,000
2. The annual cost of the personnel agency per city government employee is  
\$1.00    \$2.00    \$3.00    \$4.00    \$5.00    \$6.00    \$7.00    \$8.00
3. Of those who take the civil service examinations, the percentage who pass is  
10%    20%    30%    40%    50%    60%    70%    80%    90%
4. The percentage of city employees who leave the service each year is  
5%    10%    15%    20%    25%    30%    35%
5. The average salary of city employees is  
\$750    \$1250    \$1750    \$2250    \$2750    \$3250    \$3750    \$4250

FIGURE 7, FORM D

**How Do You Think the  
Civil Service Commission Should Keep the Citizens  
of Cincinnati Informed of the Work It Does?**

Below is a list of reporting methods we would like you to look over.

What is your opinion of the most effective ways of telling the average citizen about civil service work?

Please number each statement in order of your preference in the squares opposite each method, i.e. 1—4—2—6 etc.

Also put a circle around those methods with which you have had some contact.

*Order of preference for the methods of reporting is:*

- ☐ An annual departmental report of about 20 pages.
- ☐ Brief weekly radio talks.
- ☐ Weekly newspaper column.
- ☐ Monthly pamphlet of 3 pages, attractively printed, containing brief statements.
- ☐ In Annual Report of City of Cincinnati.
- ☐ Public addresses and conferences.
- ☐ Bulletin boards in conspicuous places.
- ☐ (I would suggest also): \_\_\_\_\_

THANKS

FIGURE 8, FORM E



the approximately correct answer was counted as a unit, and the over-all score given was the sum of these units of error. Blanks were given the value of chance scoring. With such scoring, zero becomes perfect, and chance is approximately ten in this case.<sup>8</sup>

*Form E* (Figure 8) was added to secure as many suggestions as possible respecting other modes of publicity desired by the citizens themselves.

### *Sample of Citizens Contacted*

Since the canvass of citizen opinion had to center around a restricted mailing list, the polling could not be a representative sample of the citizens of Cincinnati. Any system of governmental reporting, publicity and public relations which would be founded on a two-way flow of influencing between citizens and official servants would doubtless improve on this inquiry by use of a repetitive poll of a representative sample (an active rather than a passive complaint and suggestion bureau) on many matters of importance to governors and governed.

In view of the possibility that others may carry on with other studies of report reception and polls of citizen attitude, it is important to distinguish two varieties of sampling, each of which has its own practical uses.<sup>9</sup> First of all, the investigator may be particularly interested in some special polling, such as the polling of a mailing list and of other interest groups which might be added to future mailing lists. Such a poll can serve a number of immediate and practical purposes. It would be an interest polling. In no sense could it be considered a polling of the so-called "general public," or of the "voting public."

On the other hand, there is the general poll. It has its practical uses as foundation for a sound and evolving program of public relations. If carefully planned as a representative sample, it need not be at all formidable in size to disclose the state and change of effective modes of opinion, grievance, suggestion, and

<sup>8</sup>It is suggested that the reader refer to the footnote accompanying Table IV (p. 234) for a reproduction of the scoring schedule used with Form D.

<sup>9</sup>We are not concerned here with the important distinction between representative and random sampling.

institutional attitude among the broad public which constrains governmental officers at the official elections and in the frictions of day-to-day contacts and operations. The punch line in advocacy of such polling is the comment that there need not be so many "unexpected" reactions to planning for good government. The general representative poll, however, requires considerable advance planning of polling quotas within such population classifications as geographical areas, age groupings, sex, income levels, and political preferences.

The polling in this study was of necessity a special polling of interest groups, those actually selected for receipt of reports, and those who might be the most likely, immediate additions to the mailing lists. In such a polling the primary classifications of citizens are the various collection groups. The classificatory questions contained on Form B relative to sex, age, and local party preference were used to secure some information as to the general character of these collection groups. Response to the query respecting occupation was used principally to make sure that key people in the several collection groups were included; and information as to residence was requested merely to secure some warning as to the possibility of concentration or diversification of citizens contacted. Those polled were scattered all over the city, but returns as to residence are withheld so that there may be no possible suggestion that this interest poll is in any sense a representative sample of the "general public." Realistically considered, there are publics and publics. We have taken a picture of some of them, and many of those pictured are highly important from the point of view of personnel reporting.

Thirty-one of the forty-two local residents on the original mailing list were reached, eighteen without warning, and thirteen with such delay and warning as was occasioned by the making of special appointments. These two groups were not found to differ in regard to favor-disfavor toward the report or toward the civil service, although those who were warned did do somewhat better in the informational test, as might be expected. This latter fact suggests that governmental reporters would get their stories across better were they to become a little

more active in the distribution and follow-up of their reports. Reporting labors should not end with inactive files or the wastebasket.

As has been pointed out, forty additional copies of the report were mailed in May to Cincinnati citizens who had not previously received the report but who were on the mailing list for receipt of other publicity matter of the city's personnel agency. Twenty-four of these were contacted shortly after their receipt of the report. Twenty-six additional citizens, who had availed themselves of the opportunity to read copies of the report placed at various centers, were also canvassed. Thus a total of eighty-eight persons, including members of the press assigned to political matters, were reached for reactions to the personnel report.<sup>10</sup>

The canvass with other forms of questioning was extended to other groups, many of whom might have been included on the mailing list because of their interest in local public affairs and personnel activities. Most of these additional groups are of special significance either as "publics" with which the personnel agency has particularly close contacts (candidates for employment, employees, officials, and newspapermen), or as leaders of citizen opinion (labor leaders, active party leaders, businessmen's clubs and the like). The remaining groups are samples of important special interest groups such as young people and the unemployed.

All told, 488 citizens of Cincinnati were contacted for reaction on some two or more questionnaire forms.<sup>11</sup> In addition to those reached as readers of the personnel report, these include nine labor union secretaries and members, three Charter Group office employees, six active members of the Charter Group, five members of the Hamilton County Good Government League,

<sup>10</sup> These are the eighty-eight persons who responded on Forms A and C.

<sup>11</sup> Form B was given to 484 of these 488 citizens. Form D was added after the survey had progressed for a short time and so was given to 433 of these 488 citizens. All of the groups listed above were well represented in this number of 433. Form E was a much later addition to the battery of instruments and so was given to only 164 of the 488 citizens. These 164 included those to whom the personnel report had been sent or made available, the newspaper reporters, the club leaders, the private personnel men, the University of Cincinnati students, the government department heads, the civil service employees, the labor union men, the W.P.A. workers, and the visitors at the Unemployment Compensation office.

five leaders and members of the League of Women Voters, seven newspaper reporters, twelve department heads in the city government, thirty-three employees in the city civil service, twenty-two candidates for civil service jobs, fifteen of whom had passed their civil service examination and seven of whom had failed, sixteen W. P. A. workers, fifty visitors in the Unemployment Compensation office, eight members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, fourteen Kiwanians, twelve members of the Wisemen's Club, twenty-seven Rotarians, nine members of the Co-operative Club, ten Reserve Officers, twelve members of the Civitan Club, fifteen Negroes, seventeen students at the University of Cincinnati, eleven students in an evening business school, ten members of the Young Men's Christian Association, fourteen members of the Young Women's Christian Association, forty-two representative club leaders, and thirty-eight private personnel men.

### *Interviewing Experience*

Aside from the difficulty of locating particular persons on a "panel" such as a mailing list, the great difficulty was not that of getting people to respond in an interview but that of terminating the interview gracefully. The citizens are more interested in their government and its affairs than many have assumed them to be. Of course all forms of questioning were not used in all interviews. The forms dealing with the report were not applicable to those who had not read it. Some of the forms were added experimentally as the canvass progressed. And in a few instances, practical exigencies of the interviewing situation precluded complete coverage.

Experience with Form D is of particular interest since some of the advisers argued against its use on the grounds that citizens would be too busy to consider it and would not have accurate information anyway. Actual experience indicates that such a form can be administered easily. Indeed, it appealed as one of the "quiz" games that are currently so popular. Moreover, it is essential that those who would study public opinion in terms of individual reactions be prepared to give up precon-

ceived notions about the interest, ability or opinion of such broad typings as "the average citizen." "Public opinion" is what you find it to be in a great variety of "publics." Although these various groups are components of a whole, they differ substantially from one another in size, interests, and attitudes.

*Some Comments on the Treatment of Data*

The mailing list and the number of individuals who actually read the personnel report constitute too limited a group to invite much subdivision for study of differentials in measures and percentages gained by use of Forms A and C. However, if Form A were applied to a larger list of report or publicity readers, or if another application were to be compared with this one, it would be possible to employ the probable error of the scale positions of landmark statements of the instrument<sup>12</sup> to determine which differentials are significant. Considering that three times a probable error of that sort is a differential that begins to be significant, one may point out that it would be necessary for other public reports to receive a rating higher than 74 or lower than 70 to be judged significantly different from the Cincinnati personnel report as respects the favor-disfavor of reader reception.

There is always the temptation to do something with the free answers written in on margins of questionnaire forms. Of course, where these are in the nature of suggestions, a single comment may be exceedingly pertinent. But in reporting these comments, other than for the purpose of listing the variety found, we have been mindful of the very good rule that free answer response is significant only to the extent that it is inductively classified and the frequency of instances falling under various classifications noted. Where the investigator picks out free comment as it happens to appeal to him and presents it as "typical" or as giving his readers the "feel" of the data, he is really evidencing his own attitude and interest more than he is describing the attitude of his sample.

<sup>12</sup> See L. L. Thurstone and E. J. Chave, *The Measurement of Attitudes* (Chicago: 1929), p. 42.

## THE FINDINGS AS TO RECEPTION OF REPORTING

*Over-All Favor-Disfavor Rating of the Report*

Table I presents a distribution of the eighty-eight citizens of Cincinnati contacted as readers of the personnel report, by degrees of favor-disfavor toward the document. This table summarizes the story of the report's reception. Almost everyone liked the publication, but many had reservations.

TABLE I. DISTRIBUTION OF 88 CITIZENS OF CINCINNATI WHO WERE CONTACTED AS READERS OF THE CINCINNATI PERSONNEL REPORT FOR 1938, BY DEGREES OF FAVOR-DISFAVOR TOWARD THE REPORT

Degrees of Favor-Disfavor*	Number of Readers
90—100 .....	3
80—89 .....	15
70—79 .....	30
60—69 .....	33
50—59 .....	6
40—49 .....	0
30—39 .....	1
20—29 .....	0
10—19 .....	0
0—9 .....	0
Total.....	88†

\*Zero on the scale means extreme disfavor; one hundred means extreme favor.

†The average degree is 72, i.e. moderately favorable. The average degree for the fifty-five contacted citizens of Cincinnati who were on the mailing list for receipt of reports, bulletins, and other publicity of the city's personnel authorities is 74.

The average of the individual central tendencies of favor-disfavor was 72. This numerical rating can be given experiential meaning in a number of ways. Thus 72 is about half way along the portion of the scale representing degrees of favor, since 0 on the scale means extreme disfavor, 50 means neutrality (neither unfavorable nor favorable), and 100 means extreme favor. Again, 72 is about midway between the two landmark statements, "It contains interesting information" (scaled at 67) and "I particularly like certain features of it" (scaled at 79). It was the first of these two statements that was most frequently endorsed.

The averages of the individual lower and upper limits of favor-disfavor were 63 and 82 respectively. The first of these figures is just above the scale position of the statement which reads, "It has a few good points" (scaled at 60); while the second is a little under the scale position of the statement, "I am encouraging others to read it" (scaled at 87). That is, the most favorable comment these people would make about the report, on the average, were expressions of strong but not extreme favor; and the worst they would say, on the average, were expressions of mild, almost slight favor. It should be added that one reader in twelve did include the most favorable statement of all in the pattern of his endorsements, "I couldn't stop reading it until I finished the last page"; while only one reader endorsed any statement having a scale position lower than 24, "It is so poorly presented I could make nothing of it" (scaled at 9).

The attitudes of those on the more restricted mailing list of the personnel authorities are of particular interest. Their average degree of affect toward the report was 74, practically the same as the average for all who read the report.

Clearly the mailing list was limited almost exclusively to the friends of the system. As will be pointed out later, there are those in Cincinnati who are somewhat unfriendly toward, or have doubt about the merit system as it has operated in the city's service. It would seem that they should be included for receipt of reports and other publicity. It is a sound principle of public relations work to make friends as well as keep them. The Cincinnati reporters should study their publics and direct their publicity to a representative sample of citizens, not excluding those who are not strong advocates of the merit system. Crucial issues may turn on the success of officials in achieving understanding of their programs among various publics.

#### *Reaction to Several Features of the Personnel Report*

Following is a summary of the comments on various features of the report gained by use of Form C.

The cover of the report was considered "attractive" by 54.3 per cent of the readers, "suitable" by 43.9 per cent, and "dull"

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by 1.8 per cent. As to the general appearance of the report, 59.4 per cent thought it "satisfactory," 38.2 per cent thought it "attractive," and 2.4 per cent thought it "dull." Ninety-five per cent deemed the report to be "economical," 4.8 per cent deemed it "too cheap," and 1.2 per cent considered the report to be "elaborate."

The size of the report was considered "convenient" by 97.6 per cent, and "inconvenient" by 2.4 per cent. Six per cent thought the report was "too short," 16.9 per cent thought it "too long," and 77.1 per cent thought that it was of "proper" length. Preference for a "printed" report was indicated by 22.3 per cent, while 77.7 per cent considered that mimeographing in this instance was "all right."

As to style of presentation, 83.2 per cent considered the report to be "clear," 8.4 per cent considered it "forceful," and 8.4 per cent considered it "involved." Twelve per cent thought that there was "too little" reading matter in the report, 10.9 per cent thought that there was "too much" reading matter, and 77.1 per cent thought that the reading matter was "about enough." No one questioned the accuracy of the diagrams, although only 41.6 per cent declared them to be "accurate"; and 50.6 per cent expressed the opinion that the diagrams were "simple," while 7.8 per cent expressed the opinion that the diagrams were "involved." The order of preference as respects diagrams was: bar charts, picture charts, flow charts, and pie charts. A third of the readers thought the tables were "well presented," 60.1 per cent thought they were "useful," and 6.6 per cent thought them "hard to understand." The illustrations were considered "attractive" by 76.7 per cent, "unnecessary" by 19.2 per cent, and "unattractive" by 4.1 per cent.

The content coverage was thought to be "satisfactory" by 79.2 per cent, "too detailed" by 13.9 per cent, and "too general" by 6.9 per cent. The emphasis in the report was questioned by 6.6 per cent of the readers, while 93.4 per cent considered that it maintained the "proper emphasis." The report was thought to be "one-sided" by 7.4 per cent of the readers, and a "fair presentation" by 92.6 per cent.



*Free-Answer Comments*

In the free answer response and marginal comments appreciation was expressed for the reported information concerning examinations, the work of the Commission, cost figures, civil service salary groups, personnel methods and procedures, accident prevention, age distribution of the city workers, percentage of candidates passing examinations and being appointed, results of the agency's work, turnover of employees, the planned effort to improve the service, the Commission's policy toward trade unions, the number on the eligible lists waiting for appointments, and data making comparisons with other cities possible.

Similarly, wishes were expressed for more information and explanation than the personnel report gave on examination technique and procedure, I. Q. testing, the matter of training of civil service employees, methods of preparation for examinations, promotion ratings, personnel policies and problems, methods of personnel work, on whys and wherefores, reasons for dismissal and promotion, detailed information as to what city jobs are not in the classified service, list of jobs on the city payroll but not under civil service, pre-entry training, relation of the Commission to the Board of Education, answers to criticisms of the civil service, some miscarriages of justice as regards appointments to jobs, procedures, and examination lists. These comments, reported mostly in the language of the citizens themselves, were scattered and are important as suggestion rather than as statistical analysis of approved content of reporting.

That the report was regarded as valuable chiefly for the store of information it contained is attested by the comments offered by the citizens respecting the disposition they had made of the publication. Forty-seven stated that they had filed the report; nine mentioned that they had handed it on for others to read; three claimed to have passed on its information to others; two had returned the report to the library; two confessed that they had thrown it away; one stated that he had placed it on a bulletin board; and one admitted that he had not read it at all.

*Citizen Suggestions for Improvement of Governmental Publicity*

As has been pointed out, Form E relative to preference for different modes of reporting and publicity was given to 164 citizens. The three most popular media, ranked in their order of preference on the basis of these returns were: (1) weekly newspaper column; (2) brief weekly radio talks; and (3) brief, attractively printed monthly pamphlets. Public addresses and conferences, bulletin boards in conspicuous places, and annual departmental report tied for fourth place and the annual report of the city was in last place. This is confirmation of the newer emphasis on informal methods of publicity as contrasted with the older emphasis on formal reporting.

The citizens, in their free comment, also volunteered a number of suggestions for needed publicity. The suggestions include: a brief leaflet or folder for popular distribution; a civil service column in the newspapers; material for assignments in the public schools; a popularly prepared manual for general distribution; forums and conferences on good government; a series of newspaper articles on the activities of the personnel agency, and stories about career men; use of radio; more frequent reporting; printed material on back pages of bulletins arranged so that it can be read right side up when posted on bulletin boards; and emphasis on public relations by the city government as a whole.

In this connection, the citizens' comments on their sources of information about the civil service system are important. Special publicity pointed for use in the various situations they mention might be particularly valuable. The citizens claimed to have learned of the work of the personnel agency not only from the annual report but also from the newspapers (21); contact and discussion with city officials (16); personal contacts and private conversations with other citizens (15); bulletins of the personnel agency (15); civic organizations (5); taking civil service examinations (4); school (4); others taking civil service examinations (4); civil service employees (3); other publications than reports and bulletins mailed out by the personnel

agency (3); visits to the office of the Commission (2); posted and printed announcements (2); and articles, reports of the Civil Service Assembly, and the annual reports of the city manager.<sup>13</sup>

FINDINGS AS TO ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM  
*Over-All Favor-Disfavor Measurements of Attitude Toward the Civil Service System*

The attitude toward the civil service as it operates in Cincinnati, held by 484 Cincinnati citizens contacted in this survey, is shown in Table II. The table presents a distribution of the individual "over-all" scores obtained by the Likert "raw scoring" system.<sup>14</sup> With such a system of measurement, 0 means ex-

TABLE II. DISTRIBUTION OF 484 CONTACTED CITIZENS OF CINCINNATI, BY DEGREES OF FAVOR-DISFAVOR TOWARD THE CIVIL SERVICE OF THE CITY OF CINCINNATI

Degrees of Favor-Disfavor*	Number of Citizens
90-100 .....	28
80-89 .....	63
70-79 .....	68
60-69 .....	91
50-59 .....	114
40-49 .....	60
30-39 .....	45
20-29 .....	11
10-19 .....	2
0-9 .....	2
Total .....	484†

\*Zero on the scale means extreme disfavor; one hundred means extreme favor.

†The average degree is 62, i.e. mildly favorable. The average degree for the fifty-five contacted citizens of Cincinnati who were on the mailing list for receipt of reports, bulletins and other publicity of the city's personnel authorities is 75.

<sup>13</sup>The number in the parentheses following the several comments indicates the frequency with which the comment was made. No numbers are given where the comment was made by only one person.

<sup>14</sup>Dr. Likert's "sigma scoring" method is not adaptable to this study, for the scores obtained would not be comparable to similar scores gained in other studies, unless all data gained from all studies that are ever to be compared are assembled for joint computation. Our only alteration of the "raw scoring" method has been the use of the weight series 0-25-50-75-100 instead of the usual series 1-2-3-4-5. This change produces measures which fall upon the more familiar range of zero to one hundred.

treme disfavor; extreme favor is 100; and the absolutely neutral score, neither disfavor or favor, is 50.

The average affect of those represented by the table is 62 degrees, which is mild, almost moderate favor. With this system, unlike psychophysical scales, there are no landmark statements to help give experiential meaning to various measures along the continuum. However, reference to the table will show that few citizens were extremely favorable toward the civil service system as operative in Cincinnati. Many were strongly or moderately favorable. The mode of affect falls in the range that would be best described as mildly or even slightly favorable. Scarcely any were extremely or strongly unfavorable, but a fair number were slightly to moderately unfavorable. A representative sample of all the voters might increase the proportions of those in the middle and lower ranges of the scale, because this sampling centered about the active and immediately potential mailing list for the receipt of reports.

It would appear that the "good government" people of Cincinnati are taking things for granted, or are subsiding from strong active favor for the merit system. It may be, of course, that strong attitudes are chiefly generated in periods of campaign when a new system is being pushed for adoption or an existing one is undergoing dramatic attack and criticism. So far as this sampling is concerned, it is apparent that criticism of the merit system in Cincinnati has not reached dramatic proportions. Evidently it is such as might be expected in the conduct and operation of any *status quo* that is generally accepted. It may be that extreme or strong opponents have not been included in this sample or that they have been converted. However, a distinct group of persons has remained, or has developed, which is somewhat unfavorable. A good public relations policy for this governmental agency would include a planned effort to build up a more active and understanding support among those disposed to be friendly toward the merit system and to explain misunderstandings, correct bad impressions and interpret the public personnel program in terms that will appeal to those who are now less favorably disposed toward it.

*Item Analysis of Favor-Disfavor Toward the Civil Service System*

Further analysis of the returns gives some fairly specific suggestions for needed public relations work. Thus Form B permits item scores as well as over-all scores, enabling one to note some of the features of the merit system concerning which good publicity is needed and the groups toward which that publicity can be directed to greatest advantage. In the case of these group scores, whether they are item scores or over-all scores, 0 would mean that the entire group mentioned is extremely unfavorable toward the civil service system or toward some specified feature of the system; 50 would mean that such citizens either individually or collectively are undecided; and 100 would mean that the entire group referred to is extremely favorable toward the specified feature or toward the whole system.

Proceeding in order from the most favorable to the least favorable response toward the various features of the civil service system, the following generalizations can be stated concerning the attitudes of the total sample of 484 citizens.

These citizens strongly rejected the statement (number ten) that "War veterans are not given enough preference for city jobs" (78 degrees). Possibly they are aware of the hazard of too much preference to war veterans. Or it may be that they think veterans are not the group which is particularly underprivileged or in special need in days of general depression.

They almost as strongly endorsed the statement (number one) that "The efficiency of city employees is maintained at a high level" under the civil service system of the City of Cincinnati (76 degrees). They were only slightly less strong in their reversal of statement twelve to make it read, "Most city employees are (not) paid too much money for the work they do" (73 degrees). They also agreed strongly that "A high degree of morale is maintained among the employees" of the City of Cincinnati (statement three, 71 degrees).

The sampled citizens were fairly strong in their rejection of the statement (number six) that "City jobs are so secure that there is little incentive to do good work" (68 degrees). They

were fairly strong in the opinion (statement seven) that "An attractive career in the public service is offered to young people" (68 degrees). And they were also fairly strong in their rejection of statement two, "The personnel agency spends too much money for the results obtained" (66 degrees).

These results directly contradict many arm-chair judgments on "what people think about civil service." Low efficiency and morale, too much security, too high pay, more veterans' preference, and the undesirability of a civil service career have been frequently listed as popular stereotypes. Much of the attention of civil service advocates has been directed toward overcoming them. Actually, among these Cincinnati citizens at least, these points do not seem to be crucial issues. Efforts might, therefore, be more profitably directed toward winning support for more advanced public personnel practices.

Continuing with the declining order of favor toward the civil service system as told by the averages for the total group on the several items in Form B, one comes next upon matters of friction and debate. There was only mild favor expressed on statement nine, which was reversed to read, "The personnel agency (does not give) too much attention to functions other than examining" (61 degrees). Only slight favor toward the civil service system was expressed by the faint rejection of statement thirteen, "Too many outsiders are given jobs that should go to local residents" (58 degrees). The sample group was just barely of the opinion that "The examinations are practically related to the duties of a job" (statement eight reversed, 56 degrees). The group was quite dubious about the statement (number four) that "There is too much red tape" under the civil service system of the City of Cincinnati (53 degrees).

The sampled citizens were absolutely in doubt about statement five which reads, "There are no politics and favoritism in city jobs" (50 degrees). Also they were very doubtful about the statement (number eleven) that "Citizens are kept informed of the work done by the Civil Service Commission" (48 degrees).

It will be noted that the foregoing order of declining favor was obtained by checking which took no account of order of

presentation on the ballot or of the favorable or unfavorable character of the comment to which response was requested. This is evidence of considerable internal consistency in the data.

Perhaps the call for more citizen information can never be completely satisfied; this unusual project of contacting the citizens was itself probably a stimulus to thought as to what more might or should be done. The rather widespread doubt about politics and favoritism in the civil service, however, is a matter which calls urgently for a vital program of public relations work. One part of the program would involve some canvass of the actual situation to determine what the story is that the personnel agency has to tell on this particular point. And the other would be the effective telling of the best story that can be devised on the basis of the actual facts and the advancement of practical proposals for improvement.

#### *Attitude of Various Groups Toward the Civil Service System*

When the over-all scores on attitude toward the civil service system as it operates in Cincinnati are averaged group by group, approximately the highest fourth of the groups in order of degrees of favor toward the system are the heads of the city departments (88), the members of the League of Women Voters (86), the secretaries in the Charter Group office (81), the city employees (78), the members of the Charter Group (75), those who received the second distribution of reports (75), members of the Hamilton County Good Government League (73), and the successful candidates for civil service jobs (73).

Similarly the lowest approximate fourth of the groups in order of favor toward the system are the members of the Co-operative Club (53), the Kiwanians (53), the visitors at the Unemployment Compensation office (53), the W.P.A. workers (53), the members of the Civitan Club (50), the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. members (50), the Negro group (50), and the labor union men (43).

Between these extremes of affect, and in order of favor toward the civil service system, are those on the original mailing list (71), the members of the Wisemen's Club (68), those who read

reports placed at various centers (66), the newspaper reporters (66), the candidates for civil service positions (66), the Rotarians (61), the club leaders (61), the Reserve Officers (58), the students in the evening school (58), the failed candidates for civil service positions (56), the members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce (56), the University of Cincinnati students (56), and the private personnel men (56).

### *Interpretation of Attitudes*

Clearly the highest favor toward the system is to be found among those who have a direct professional or reform interest. And seemingly, the lower ranges of favor are to be found among those whose own economic interests are more immediate, pressing, disturbing or conflicting, such as the laboring group, younger people in quest of jobs, older people having difficulty in getting jobs or harassed by economic difficulties. Obviously, government reports should be more actively and widely distributed, and governmental publicity should not only be more popularized in form and media, but should be made more vital to a greater variety of interests.

Regrouping the foregoing data by groups other than those used for collection of opinion, one finds that there was no sex differential shown toward the civil service system in Cincinnati. The differentials between those in three broad age groupings are not significant apart from the fact that favor increased consistently with age (60, 63, and 66), and the further supporting fact that student and other collection groups whose age range is more limited expressed only slight or mild favor.

There was also no difference in the favor expressed by straight Democrats (56) and straight Republicans (56). Even those who wrote in their political preferences as straight Charter (58) evidenced little more favor toward the merit system than those who wrote in the unqualified, major national party names. Greater favor toward the merit system was evidenced, however, by those who signed as Independent (66), those who omitted party preference (68), or those who signed as Charter Republicans (68) or as Charter Democrats (76).



*Accuracy of Citizen Information on Personnel Matters*

As has been stated, an informational quiz on key facts presented or stressed in the personnel report was given to 433 Cincinnati citizens. (See Form D.) Table III presents the dis-

TABLE III. DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES MADE BY 433 CINCINNATI CITIZENS ON AN INFORMATIONAL QUIZ BASED ON KEY FACTS PRESENTED OR STRESSED IN THE CITY'S PERSONNEL REPORT FOR 1938

Grades of Deviation from Correct Answers*	Number of Scorers
0.....	2
1.....	6
2.....	22
3.....	36
4.....	43
5.....	61
6.....	59
7.....	53
8.....	46
9.....	38
10.....	49
11.....	13
12.....	1
13.....	3
14.....	4
15.....	1
Total.....	433†

\*Zero or no deviation from correct answers is perfect. Chance scoring is approximately ten grades of deviation from correct answers.

†Average score is 6.4, i.e. 1.3 grades of deviation per question for the five questions in the quiz. The answer "Don't Know" was given the value of chance scoring.

tribution of scores on the examination as a whole, and Table IV gives the distribution of scores by answers to each question.

The average score of the 433 citizens on the total examination was 6.4, the mode falling at 5.0. This latter score is half way between perfect and chance scoring. The reading of the personnel report did have some effect in greater accuracy of information, for the average score for those who had received the document was 5.4 as compared with an average score of 6.6 for those who had not received it.

Incidentally, there is absolutely no correlation between the degree of favor-disfavor toward the merit system as operative in

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Cincinnati and the degree of approximation to accuracy of information about the system. There is no correlation either between the degree of favor-disfavor toward the system and the degree of favor-disfavor toward the personnel report. Nor is there any correlation between the degree of favor-disfavor to-

TABLE IV. DISTRIBUTION OF SCORERS BY ANSWERS MADE BY 433 CINCINNATI CITIZENS TO SEVERAL QUESTIONS CONTAINED IN AN INFORMATIONAL QUIZ BASED ON KEY FACTS PRESENTED OR STRESSED IN THE CITY'S PERSONNEL REPORT FOR 1938

Grades of Deviation from Correct Answer*	Number of Scorers on Each of Several Questions†				
	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5
+5.....	...	...	1	2	1
+4.....	...	...	13	7	2
+3.....	...	11	36	8	3
+2.....	...	17	60	26	6
+1.....	36	30	36	56	52
0.....	108	87	67	138	175
-1.....	108	37	91	151	143
-2.....	71	80	53	...	6
-3.....	52	50	29	...	...
-4.....	...	42	...	...	...
"Don't Know".....	58	79	47	45	45
Total.....	433	433	433	433	433

\*Zero score is given for correct answer.

†Question 1—The City Government of Cincinnati spends annually on wages and salaries:

\$4,500,000	\$5,500,000	\$6,500,000	\$7,500,000	\$8,500,000
(-3)	(-2)	(-1)	(0)	(+1)

Question 2—The annual cost of the personnel agency per city government employee is:

\$1.00	\$2.00	\$3.00	\$4.00	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$7.00	\$8.00
(-4)	(-3)	(-2)	(-1)	(0)	(+1)	(+2)	(+3)

Question 3—Of those who take the civil service examinations, the percentage who pass is:

10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%
(-3)	(-2)	(-1)	(0)	(+1)	(+2)	(+3)	(+4)	(+5)

Question 4—The percentage of city employees who leave the service each year is:

5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%
(-1)	(0)	(+1)	(+2)	(+3)	(+4)	(+5)

Question 5—The average salary of city employees is:

\$750	\$1250	\$1750	\$2250	\$2750	\$3250	\$3750	\$4250
(-2)	(-1)	(0)	(+1)	(+2)	(+3)	(+4)	(+5)

ward the personnel report and the degree of approximation to accuracy of information about the system reported.

As to accuracy of information on the several items in the examination, it will be noted by reference to Table IV that the

modal group of the 433 citizens gave the right answer on two of the items, Question 5 on the average salary of city employees, and Question 2 on the annual cost of the personnel agency per city government employee. A similar tabulation including only the scores of those who had received the personnel report would show that the modal group gave the correct answer on all five questions. This fact may give some support to those who urge the desirability of citizen conferences and forums on public matters. Thus, had there been a citizen conference including the report recipients as members, the most frequently encountered judgment would have been the accurate one on all points of fact even though any one of the participants severally might have been inaccurate on a number of points.

In order of accuracy of impression among the 433 citizens, the list of points in the factual examination is as follows: the average salary of city employees (average score being 0.6), the percentage of city employees leaving the service annually (0.9), the annual expenditure of the city on wages and salaries (1.3), the percentage passing the civil service examinations (1.6), and the annual cost of the personnel agency per city government employee (1.8).

The first of these figures is nearer the individual's experience,<sup>15</sup> and the last is one with which most citizens have had little training.<sup>16</sup> It is gratifying that the highly diagnostic figure on employee turnover should have been so well known, but it is somewhat surprising that the examination results should have been so inaccurately understood. Reference to Table IV will also show that many citizens of Cincinnati are not aware that the annual wage and salary expenditures, the salaries of city employees, and the cost of the personnel agency's work

<sup>15</sup> The correct answer was not uniformly placed in the several series, although some portions of series might not have been entirely plausible. Plausibility might have affected some restriction of choice, although it would seem that information has something to do with plausibility. And as a matter of fact the ranking is in some reverse relation to the number of choices on a question.

<sup>16</sup> See H. C. Beyle, *Governmental Reporting and Public Relations* (1938), pp. 16-19, a mimeographed report of a survey of the "ten years of competitive reporting" under Clarence E. Ridley's system of report appraisal. Students of administration have had much to say about the desirability of reporting ratio figures; but surprisingly few of such figures have been used in public reports.

are as high as they actually are. It will show, also, that the personnel agency has a reputation for being more severe in its examining process than it actually is. Perhaps it is a good policy to cultivate such a reputation as a means of fending off without effort those who would be poor candidates for the civil service positions. It is true, however, that much citizen dissatisfaction and skepticism centers about the frictions of the examining process. A good public relations policy would involve some clarification of bad impressions in this connection.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the foregoing discussion particular suggestions as to reporting, publicity, and public relations work have been offered as the data have seemed to indicate their pertinence. In conclusion there are a number of broader recommendations which can be made on the basis of this survey of Cincinnati citizens.

These recommendations should be read, of course, with the limitations of the sample always in mind. And the writers hasten to add that there should be no implication that the Cincinnati officials are not already doing much to advance the informative activities of government. As many know, the governmental reporters of the Cincinnati government are among the best in the municipal field. Indeed few governmental publicists would care to hazard a check upon the reception of their product.

Furthermore, some of the recommendations would involve more than the personnel officials of the government. The development and operation of a planned program of improved public relations calls for considerable cooperation between officials chiefly concerned with the total conduct of a governmental system and those in charge of particular departments. This is not the place to discuss the problems of integration. But the personnel departments would certainly have a large share in such a program, for citizen contacts and impressions depend so much on governmental personnel.

Now as to such matters as may be best classified as *public relations work*, it may be suggested that:

1. This survey should be followed up to discover why some of the important groups of citizens are unfavorably disposed or only mildly favorable to some of the features of the civil service. Favor, in some degree, did predominate, of course. But there were some groups of citizens who were surprisingly critical; and others, whom one would expect to be somewhat opposed, need to be reached and won. For example, particular attention should be directed toward winning the understanding and support of the lowest income groups, young people, laboring and businessmen. Some may have actual grievances. Others may lack information or be misinformed. There may be varieties of unfavorable impressions gained in an equal variety of ways or arising from many different causes.

2. A continuous system of sampling citizen attitude should be instituted so that public servants can keep abreast of the wishes and concerns of those whom they serve. An orthodox name for such an activity would be "an active rather than a passive complaint and suggestion bureau," although the officer in charge of such a bureau would soon find that repetitive polling of a representative sample or panel of citizens would prove inexpensive and most productive of sound suggestion.

3. There should be a canvass of the friction points in the contacts of officers and citizens. That is to say, exploration of the why and wherefores of citizen disfavor should be paralleled by some self analysis of the official operations. There may be unnecessary causes for friction, misunderstanding, and bad impression which can be remedied, reduced, or more carefully explained. Thus the amount of "red tape" in civil service is a particularly sore point. Simplification of some procedures can doubtless be achieved. And in so far as it is impossible to eliminate red tape, special attention should be devoted to explaining its necessity.

4. There could be a canvass of the types of situations in which citizens and officials come in contact. Out of such a canvass might come a series of job analyses which could result in materials for training governmental employees in the ways and means of improved public relations.

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5. The story that the personnel agency has to tell the various publics and the story that various publics wish or need to be told should be continually reconsidered. This is much more than a matter of developing a standard series of diagnostic statistical figures in which only a limited public might be interested. Some of the citizens canvassed were greatly concerned over unreported problems of the service that were vital and real to them. Thus the values of a positive personnel policy must be sold particularly to labor and businessmen before too much expansion of the functions of the personnel agency is attempted. And strangely enough, the young people need some education and explanation of the possibilities of what older men have termed a career in the public service. There are many problems such as that of nonresident appointments that could be told more fully to good advantage.

6. Provision could be made for greater citizen participation in the personnel service. Thus every effort should be made to stress the impartiality of the civil service since this is the point about which so much doubt was expressed. To this end there could be greater use of union leaders and private personnel men on examining boards. Greater use of citizen advisers might also still much of the criticism as to the practicality of civil service examinations. And there could be greater cooperation with the curriculum builders in the schools and colleges, for there was a distinct note of cynicism among the students and young people. The possibilities of cooperative participation as a means of civic education in a democracy need to be more thoroughly explored.

Under the broad heading of *publicity and reporting*, it may be suggested that:

1. There should be continual canvass and development of the possibilities of all manner of media for publicity and education. The citizens themselves, in this survey, have suggested many uses of specialized folders, high school teaching material, a general text for adult education, newspapers, the radio, citizen conferences and forums, exhibits and other devices of publicity and reporting. A weekly newspaper column on civil

service would seem to have promise of being well read. And the annual report should be supplemented by a planned system of specialized publications which would meet the demands of varied groups and interests.

2. A campaign of education should be developed on the several substantive points which this survey disclosed were in question among various groups. It should be adapted to the informational needs of special groups and should employ media best calculated to reach specific groups of citizens.

3. The present annual report of the personnel authorities is generally satisfactory in form and content. But its distribution should be broadened to cover more interest groups, particularly "good government" groups, those receiving other literature of the agency, business and labor groups. The economical practice of mimeographing, in the case of annual reports of departments, should be continued, although other means of offset printing might permit of more effective treatment of reported material. Also, the annual report might be better accepted if it were somewhat shorter.

4. Departmental publicists should provide those in charge of the general annual city report with suggestions for some greater emphasis on personnel problems of governmental personnel.

Finally, it will doubtless be found that this very project of citizen canvass has stimulated interest and has been of educational value to a number of those who were contacted. This interest could be followed up. And above all, many other personnel agencies could profitably follow the lead of the Cincinnati agency in a similar exploration of the reception of their publicity.

## Appendix C

### A Check List of Recommended Public Relations Policies

#### THE SMALL LOCAL AGENCY

<i>Media</i>	<i>Policies</i>
1. Attitude Survey	Formal survey only at long intervals. Follow up informally.
2. Policy Formulation	Head of agency should review all policies and practices for public relations "bugs."
3. Informational Base	Collect only items of highest diagnostic value.
4. Special Publications	
a. Standard Information	Circulate law and rules as reprints. Interpret procedures by personal contact.
b. Periodic Information	Issue brief annual technical report. Participate in general city annual report.
c. Special Problem Information	Use only memoranda and personal explanation.
5. Press	Follow contact suggestions.
6. Radio	Use only on special occasions.
7. Movies	Rent occasionally if available.
8. Exhibits	Take part in exhibits. Borrow displays.
9. Participation	Use local professional men.
10. Schools	Cooperate on curriculum and with vocational advisers.
11. Speeches	Cultivate opportunities.
12. Contacts	Talk over in staff conferences.
13. Conferences	Have with officials, employees as needed.
14. Responsibility	Head of agency.

#### THE LARGE LOCAL AGENCY

1. Attitude Survey Follow Cincinnati procedure. Follow up annually.
2. Policy Formulation Special person should be responsible for clearing all policies and practices from public relations angle.
3. Informational Base Collect items of high and doubtful diagnostic value.



<i>Media</i>	<i>Policies</i>
4. Special Publications	
a. Standard Information	Circulate law and rules as reprints. Produce personnel handbook.
b. Periodic Information	Issue semi-popular periodic report; house organ; and annual technical report. Participate in general administration report.
c. Special Problem Information	Issue technical special problem reports and leaflet series.
5. Press	Follow contact suggestions, issue occasional press statements. Weekly civil service column.
6. Radio	Run function interview series. Use examination announcements on local stations.
7. Movies	Rent if available. Cooperate on general city government film.
8. Exhibits	Cultivate display opportunities. Follow all preparation suggestions.
9. Participation	Use local professional societies.
10. Schools	Cooperate on curriculum. Prepare special materials. Assist vocational advisers.
11. Speeches	Cultivate opportunities.
12. Contacts	Undertake formal course-conference method and prepare manual.
13. Conferences	Have regular meetings with various groups.
14. Responsibility	Special secretary to head of agency.

### THE STATE AGENCY

1. Attitude Survey      Undertake at state fair and by correspondence. Follow-up annually.
2. Policy Formulation      Special person or committee should be responsible for reviewing all policies and practices from public relations angle.
3. Informational Base      Collect items of high and doubtful diagnostic value.
4. Special Publications
  - a. Standard Information      Circulate law reprints. Use procedure manual and personnel handbook.
  - b. Periodic Information      Issue semi-popular periodic report, house organ, technical annual report and brief popular report.
  - c. Special Problem Information      Issue technical special problem reports and leaflet series.

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<i>Media</i>	<i>Policies</i>
5. Press	Use contact suggestions, press conferences, press statements and press releases.
6. Radio	Develop "Men-at-Work" series (dramatized). Use spot announcements of examinations on state network or records.
7. Movies	Make "Men-at-Work" films. Circulate intensively around state.
8. Exhibits	Cultivate opportunities. Follow display suggestions. Consider permanent traveling exhibit.
9. Participation	Use with discretion.
10. Schools	Consult with state education department on curriculum. Prepare special pamphlet for school use.
11. Speeches	Organize speakers bureau. Train people. Cultivate opportunities.
12. Contacts	Undertake formal course-conference and correspondence methods. Develop contact manuals.
13. Conferences	Have regular meetings.
14. Responsibility	Special public relations man.

### THE DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL OFFICE

1. Attitude Survey    Poll special publics by questionnaire and interview.
2. Policy Formulation    Personnel director review policies and procedures for effect on public relations.
3. Informational Base    Collect all moderate and high diagnostic value figures for department head and central agency.
4. Special Publications
  - a. Standard Information    Develop procedure manual and employee service pamphlet.
  - b. Periodic Information    Issue periodic administrative reports. Issue house organ.
  - c. Special Problem Information    Develop leaflet series. Issue technical special problem reports.
5. Press    Have occasional press conferences. Follow contact rules.
6. Radio    Cooperate with central personnel agency.
7. Movies    Cooperate with central agency.
8. Exhibits    Cooperate with central agency.

<i>Media</i>	<i>Policies</i>
9. Participation	Cooperate with central agency.
10. Schools	Cooperate with central agency.
11. Speeches	Follow preparation and delivery suggestions.
12. Contacts	Administer section of formal training course.
13. Conferences	Regular with employees. As needed with line officials.
14. Responsibility	Personnel director.

### THE NEW PERSONNEL AGENCY

1. Attitude Survey      Undertake comprehensive general attitude study on first half of World's Fair form. Special studies of examinees, department heads, and similar groups.
2. Policy Formulation      Special person review all policies and procedures for public relations effect. Doubtful cases reviewed by advisory committee.
3. Informational Base      Collect high diagnostic figures only at first. Emphasize figures showing savings.
4. Special Publications
  - a. Standard Information      Publish and circulate law. Issue loose-leaf procedure manual. Issue popularized "How to Get a Job" leaflets.
  - b. Periodic Information      Issue detailed annual report and popular annual report. Start semi-popular bulletin as soon as possible.
  - c. Special Problem Information      Issue technical reports on classification, qualifying examinations, etc. Issue popular summaries of each.
5. Press      Have regular press conferences, follow contact rules, issue news and feature releases.
6. Radio      Use five-minute series explaining program. Use spot announcements for examinations.
7. Movies      Rent circulating movies. Cultivate opportunities to show them.
8. Exhibits      Cultivate exhibit opportunities.
9. Participation      Use with great discretion.
10. Schools      Supply explaining pamphlets to schools.
11. Speeches      Cultivate all possible opportunities. Train speaking squad.

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<i>Media</i>	<i>Policies</i>
12. Contacts	Use pep talk method temporarily.
13. Conferences	Man-to-man with line officials. Run introductory series with other special publics.
14. Responsibility	Special public relations man.

### MERIT SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS

1. Attitude Survey Undertake national survey similar to World's Fair study every few years.
2. Policy Formulation Keep members posted on public relations successes and blunders in other jurisdictions.
3. Informational Base Continue efforts to standardize informational base. Develop appraisal form. Collect national figures.
4. Special Publications
  - a. Standard Information Issue standard civil service advocacy pamphlets. Collect and collate laws and procedures.
  - b. Periodic Information Issue annual statistical summary of personnel operations. Publish developments.
  - c. Special Problem Information Publish technical articles.
5. Press Get special releases on national wires. Issue personnel clip-sheet regularly.
6. Radio Possibility of developing national network "Government Employees at Work" program. Circulate scripts as possible records for local programs.
7. Movies Make several reels explaining civil service to be circulated to local agencies.
8. Exhibits Prepare portable exhibit materials to be loaned to local agencies.
9. Schools Cooperate with central educational associations to develop study units, and college courses in field.
10. Speeches Arrange civil service talks at national conventions of civic and other organizations.
11. Contacts Collect contact training materials.
12. Conferences Sponsor national conferences and conventions.
13. Responsibility Special public relations committee.

## Appendix D

### Report on the New York City Investigation

THE New York City Civil Service Commission included in each of the three thousand copies of its 1938 annual report a reply ballot similar to the psychophysical scale ballot used in the Cincinnati study. (See Figure 4, Form A.) Several features of this ballot form require explanation. At the head of the questionnaire was the following introductory comment:

The Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University is engaged in a survey of character and effectiveness of public reporting in the United States. This Commission has been requested to enclose the following questionnaire with its 1938 annual report. You are requested to appraise the report in terms of this questionnaire and mail your response directly to the Maxwell School in the attached postpaid envelope. The Commission will appreciate your cooperation with the Maxwell School survey.

Following this introduction, thirteen tested statements of a psychophysical scale were presented for checking. These comments upon the report have scale values which run all the way from 0 (extreme disfavor), through 50 (neutrality), to 100 (extreme favor). The list of statements was headed by the question: "What do you think of the latest Civil Service report of the City of New York?" The directions for checking read as follows: "Please check THE statement or statements which BEST REPRESENT YOUR OPINION." This part of the ballot permits measurement of the various gradations of favorable or unfavorable response toward the report.

The measurement portion of the ballot form was followed by a simple question calling for free answer as respects features of the report *apropos* of which favor or disfavor was indicated.

"What features of the report did you: DISLIKE? LIKE?" Tabulation of these answers permits discovery of the "content" of favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward the report.

The form concluded with a variety of questions which several members of this Committee thought should be included in view of the general effort being made to study reception of reports. Invitation was also given to continue comments on the reverse side of the ballot. These supplemental comments were used to check upon the reader's scaled statement of favor or disfavor regarding the report.

#### ANALYSIS OF REPLIES

Inspection of the returned ballots gives ample evidence of complete candor on the part of those citizens who did reply. The real story, however, is the small number who replied. All told, only 87 replies were received, although there was opportunity for three thousand. This response of 3.9 per cent is exceedingly low, even for response similarly conditioned. This story should enforce the oft repeated warning that reports should be considered "good" or "bad" in terms of the "catching end of the game" as well as in terms of the "pitching." It can hardly be that the form itself acted as a deterrent, for only one person answered the "free answer" section of the questionnaire without checking the scaled comments, while five checked the scaled statements without adding free comment. Moreover, it was possible to make the reply without cost for postage. All that was required was sufficient effort and interest to read the report and to check and mail the response.

As indicated in Table V, the bulk of the response came from those who were favorably inclined toward the report.

#### *Free Answer Comments*

The free answer comments were inductively classified on a basis forced by the content of the replies. All told, 271 separate and distinct comments were made. Of these, approximately 56 per cent were favorable; the remaining 44 per cent were unfavorable. This body of comment fell into six distinct cate-

TABLE V. DISTRIBUTION OF ATTITUDES OF 86 PERSONS CONTACTED AS READERS OF THE 1938 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NEW YORK CITY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION, INDICATING VARYING DEGREES OF FAVOR-DISFAVOR TOWARD THE REPORT

Degrees of Favor-Disfavor*	Number of Persons Responding
90—100.....	3
80—89.....	21
70—79.....	31
60—69.....	17
50—59.....	6
40—49.....	4
30—39.....	1
20—29.....	1
10—19.....	1
0—9.....	1
Total.....	86†

\*Zero on the scale means extreme disfavor; one hundred means extreme favor.

†One respondent did not check the scaled statements.

gories. Thus, about 44 per cent dealt with the substantive matter of the report; about 16 per cent with organization, arrangement and style of writing; about 13 per cent with the attitude of the report writer; about 13 per cent with matters of graphic presentation; about 9 per cent with the physical setup of the report; and about 5 per cent with matters of statistical presentation.

The comments on the attitude of the report writer were surprising. Certainly it is not a category with which students of governmental reporting have greatly concerned themselves. Eight out of nine of the comments in this category were unfavorable. The gist of the unfavorable comment of this sort is indicated by the following quotations: "Too much self praise," "Continual note of self-satisfaction," "Too much knocking," and "Too much of a defensive tone." On the other hand there were some favorable comments such as: "Frank and open dealing with the public," "Social point of view," and "A most progressive approach."

Since it might be assumed that unfavorable comment concerning the attitude of the report writer must surely come from those entirely unfavorable to the report, the following analysis

is in point. Fifty-nine per cent of these unfavorable comments came from those whose general over-all favor toward the report fell between 65 and 79 degrees, that is to say, moderate to strong favor. Stating the same point in a different way, one may note that those expressing disfavor toward the report writer's attitude average 65 degrees in their total over-all affect toward the report, their responses ranging from 19 to 92 degrees. This average is to be compared with the average of 72 degrees for the total number of readers who responded.

Interestingly enough, matters of substance were commented upon more frequently than any other feature of the report. Within this classification the responses were favorable in about the ratio of six to four. About half of the favorable comment expressed appreciation of broad interpretations; the remainder dealt largely with particular matters of content, and principally with matters of procedure and operation such as the testing and examining techniques, forms and practices. On the other side of the case, the comment, in order of frequency, dealt with matters omitted, "inaccuracies," material "unnecessarily included," matters particularly disliked, and the delay in the reporting of data.

About three out of four liked the organization, arrangement, and style of the written portion of the report. The unfavorable comment dealt principally with "lack of organization," although "rambling" and "excessive verbiage" were also commented upon. Those speaking favorably mentioned the order and emphasis gained by headings and by box arrangements, and commented upon the "readable and clear" writing style of the reporter.

The comments upon graphic and pictorial representation were favorable in the ratio of about two to one. The charts were the chief objects of criticism. Seemingly they offended standards of expert workmanship in several respects, and in some cases failed to catch popular interest.

Comments upon the physical setup of the report, the format, paper and typography, were about evenly balanced between favor and disfavor, there being slightly less of the latter. The



comments upon the statistical presentation in the report were similarly balanced, slightly on the side of favor.

Clearly, it was interpretation rather than facts which caught favor or disfavor among the small number of report readers who responded in this study. How the 2,913 other readers of the report reacted, we do not know. It is to be hoped that the report was widely read. Particularly, it is to be hoped that, as several of the respondents suggested, the report has been used in high school and college classes, in libraries, and in various clubs.

## *Appendix E*

### **The World's Fair Study**

**W**HAT does the citizen think of the merit principle as applied to the administration of government? What does he think of the way public personnel agencies operate? How does he feel about some of the moot questions of personnel administration, such as residence restrictions, veterans' preference, and unionization of public employees?

The answers to these and similar questions are of vital importance to the personnel administrator, for it is the citizen who must pay the bills, vote for representatives who will support the merit system, and provide recruits for the service. The citizen and his attitudes can support or obstruct the introduction and maintenance of good personnel practices. Some partial answer to these questions can be gained from a poll conducted at the New York World's Fair in cooperation with the New York City Civil Service Commission and the International Business Machines Corporation.

#### **DEVELOPMENT OF THE ATTITUDE SCALE**

The instrument used in this poll is shown in Figure 9. The heading, directions and request for personal data will not require much explanation. They evidence considerable care to secure candor on the part of the responding citizen. Also, the whole instrument was designed to place as little burden on citizen insight as possible. Insight was sought through the instrument's provision of related queries, which might severally be simple, yet illuminative in combination.

The portion of the instrument which may need some further explanation, however, is the list of twenty-three attitude items. These twenty-three questions, dealing with various dispositions toward different aspects of the merit principle and its actual

RESIDENCE: State \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

SEX: Male ☐ Female ☐ AGE: 18-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45 and Over ☐ PARTY PREFERENCE: Republican ☐ Democrat ☐ Other ☐ None ☐

EDUCATION: Grades \_\_\_\_\_ High School ☐ College ☐ Business or Trade School ☐

OCCUPATION: Professional ☐ Proprietor-Farm ☐ Proprietor-Other ☐ Housekeeper ☐ Salaried-Executive ☐ Salaried-Minor ☐  
Wages-Factory ☐ Wages-Other ☐ Retired ☐ Student ☐ Unemployed ☐

HAVE YOU EVER TAKEN A CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION? Yes ☐ No ☐

THANK YOU-

FIGURE 9. ATTITUDE SCALE USED IN WORLD'S FAIR STUDY

operation, fall into three groups. The first ten queries are concerned with attitudes toward the merit system in principle. The second ten queries deal with attitudes toward the merit system in actual operation. The last three items are concerned with the comparative prestige of the civil service in the federal government, in the citizen's home state, and in his home community. These last three items produce item scores, whereas the first and second blocs of queries give both item and over-all scores.

The citizen responding in the poll was given opportunity to check five grades of endorsement or rejection of these several statements of attitude. Thus if he decidedly agreed with the first statement, "Public employees should be selected through fair competition among all competent persons who wish to apply," he would evidence a high degree of favor toward the principle of the merit system. But if he decidedly disagreed with that statement, he would evidence a low degree of affect toward the merit principle. The reverse interpretation would be given to checking of the second statement of attitude, "Public jobs should go to faithful workers of the winning political party." Similarly the statements vary throughout the instrument to enforce careful consideration of the comments by the citizens who were polled.

### *Scoring of Responses*

Individual over-all scores were promptly produced at the time a citizen was polled, either at the New York City Civil Service Commission's exhibit or at the Public Health exhibit. We are here concerned, however, with the item and over-all scores for the total sample and its various divisions. The following group scores are numerical summarizations of these graded endorsements and rejections as achieved by the "raw score method" devised by Dr. Rensis Likert.<sup>1</sup> Our only alteration in method has been the use of the weight series 0-25-50-75-100 instead of the usual series 1-2-3-4-5. This change produces measures which fall upon the more familiar range of 0 to 100.

<sup>1</sup>"A Technique for the Measurement of Attitude," *Archives of Psychology*, No. 140 (1932).

Consider for example, the measures summarizing the responses to the first ten queries relating to the merit system in principle. They would fall upon a scale in which 0 would mean that the entire group mentioned is extremely unfavorable toward the merit principle. A score of 50 would mean that such citizens either individually or collectively are undecided, and a score of 100 would mean that the entire group referred to is extremely favorable to the merit system in principle. It is important to remember that measurements on such a scale are not percentages of a group of persons, but are degrees of favor-disfavor.

Similarly the measures summarizing the response to the second ten queries would be comparable to the measures for the first group in so far as degree of favor-disfavor. The only difference would be that which is favored or disfavored—the practice rather than the principle of the merit system. Likewise, any item measure for a group is comparable to all other item measures and to the over-all measures as respects the degree of favor or disfavor. Again the only difference would be the particular feature of the merit principle or practice which is favored or disfavored.

The reader must not assume that the people who registered their attitudes by means of this instrument constitute a representative sample. They came in undue proportions from New York's metropolitan area and from the higher income groups. The sample was predominantly masculine in the ratio of approximately two to one. Approximately three-fifths of the responses were recorded at the public health exhibit and the remainder at the civil service exhibit. Of the approximately three thousand persons, 27.6 per cent checked their occupational classification as "student," 20.1 per cent as "professional," 15.3 per cent as "salary-minor," 13.3 per cent as "wages-other-than-factory," 7.4 per cent as "housewife." The remaining 16.3 per cent were scattered among the following classifications, in order of frequency: "salaried-executive," "unemployed," "wages-factory," "proprietor-other-than-farm," "retired," and "proprietor-farm." Thus the sample should be taken only for what it actu-

ally is—a large group of people sufficiently interested in public health and civil service to include a visit to exhibits of such matters in their coverage of the many interesting things at the World's Fair. If they are found to hold "unwanted" attitudes, one should be prepared to expect even more of "unwanted" dispositions toward various aspects of the merit principle among the general public.

## ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

Table VI presents the several measures of favor-disfavor among the total sample and among various classifications of the

TABLE VI. MEASURES OF FAVOR-DISFAVOR TOWARD VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE MERIT PRINCIPLE, AS INDICATED BY RESPONSES TO ITEMS 1 TO 10 ON ATTITUDE SCALE USED AT NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR (SEE FIGURE 9)

Classification of Visitors to the Fair Who Responded	Degrees of Favor-Disfavor on Several Statements										Average for Items 1 to 10
	Item No. 1	Item No. 2	Item No. 3	Item No. 4	Item No. 5	Item No. 6	Item No. 7	Item No. 8	Item No. 9	Item No. 10	
<i>Total</i> .....	94	88	29	48	44	38	67	48	63	60	58
<i>Location of Response:</i>											
Civil Service Exhibit	95	89	30	50	46	38	70*	45*	68*	55*	58
Public Health Exhibit	94	87	28	47	42	38	65	51*	59*	64*	57
<i>Sex:</i>											
Male.....	96	89	31	49	44	39	68	47	68*	60	59
Female.....	92	85*	26*	47	43	35*	65	51*	54*	58	56
<i>Occupational Classification:</i>											
Professional.....	96	90	29	50	47*	37	68	60†	66*	64*	60
Proprietor—Farm...	79*	70*	14*	69*	50*	57*	36*	41*	59*	54*	48*
Proprietor—Other...	96	85*	29	43*	46	48*	56*	48	52*	72*	57
Housekeeper.....	92	79†	26*	47	39*	35*	57†	52*	55†	70†	55*
Salaried—Executive.	98*	89	25*	47	35†	46†	68	37†	66*	71†	58
Salaried—Minor...	95	91*	27	50	38†	39	68	38†	60*	59	56
Wages—Factory...	97*	86	26*	41†	45	34*	55†	29†	62	59	54*
Wages—Other.....	95	83*	34*	52*	43	38	66	33†	66*	49†	56
Retired.....	94	91*	11*	52*	34*	40	67	42*	60*	83*	58
Unemployed.....	94	87	27	42†	41*	46†	69	34†	56†	62	56
Student.....	94	89	36†	47	26†	39	73†	58†	65	56*	58
<i>Total Non-Student</i> .....	94	87	28	48	51	37	65	45*	62	61	58

\*A noticeable differential as compared with similar measure for the total sample.

†A significant differential as compared with similar measure for the total sample.

sample toward various aspects of the merit principle. These measures are the item and over-all scores for the first ten state-

TABLE VII. MEASURES OF FAVOR-DISFAVOR TOWARD VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE MERIT PRINCIPLE, AS INDICATED BY RESPONSES TO ITEMS 11 TO 20 ON ATTITUDE SCALE USED AT NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR (SEE FIGURE 9)

Classification of Visitors to the Fair Who Responded	Degrees of Favor-Disfavor on Several Statements											Average for Items 11 to 20
	Item No. 11	Item No. 12	Item No. 13	Item No. 14	Item No. 15	Item No. 16	Item No. 17	Item No. 18	Item No. 19	Item No. 20		
Total.....	38	47	61	47	78	61	42	67	35	79	56	
<i>Location of Response:</i>												
Civil Service Exhibit	42*	52*	61	52*	81*	63	45*	68	35	82*	58	
Public Health Exhibit	35*	44*	61	44*	76	59	41	67	35	78	54	
<i>Sex:</i>												
Male.....	37	48	60	48	79	60	41	67	36	79	55	
Female.....	38	46	63	46	76	61	47*	68	35	81	56	
<i>Occupational Classification:</i>												
Professional.....	36	42*	56*	44*	80	64*	43	67	33	77	54	
Proprietor—Farm ..	48*	25*	54*	27*	67*	57*	36*	67	32*	83*	50*	
Proprietor—Other..	44*	36*	70*	45	79	54*	37*	72*	33	84*	56	
Housekeeper.....	38	36†	70†	39†	73*	55†	41	71	35	81	54	
Salaried—Executive	30†	47	62	51*	78	56†	34†	62*	33	72†	52†	
Salaried—Minor ...	35*	49	62	48	81*	60	44	69	36	82*	57	
Wages—Factory....	40	56†	67†	47	76	61	39*	71*	41†	80	58	
Wages—Other .....	36	56†	58*	50*	81*	62	39*	68	38*	83*	57	
Retired.....	50*	46	71*	41*	66*	54*	50*	79*	45*	77	58	
Unemployed.....	37	51*	67†	46	77	60	46*	69	43†	76*	57	
Student .....	42*	48	61	50*	76	61	49†	69	39*	79	57	
Total Non-Student ...	36	47	61	46	78	60	41	67	34	80	55	

\*A noticeable differential as compared with similar measure for the total sample.

†A significant differential as compared with similar measure for the total sample.

ments of the instrument. Table VII presents similar measures for the second ten statements of the instrument dealing with various aspects of merit system practice. Similarly Table VIII presents the item measures for the last three statements of the instrument, which involve the comparative prestige of the federal civil service, the civil service in the citizen's home state, and the service in his home community.

In these tables presenting mean degrees of favor-disfavor for various sub-groups of the sample on the several statements of attitude, only those measures are emphasized which differ from the comparable total sample measure by three or more degrees. In no case should a smaller differential be given any attention.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>This caution is founded in the fact that instruments such as have been used in this study usually produce measures which correlate highly ( $+0.85$ ) with measures produced by psychophysical scales for which three times P.E. of the scale positions would be three degrees on a hundred degree range.

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TABLE VIII. MEASURES OF FAVOR-DISFAVOR TOWARD OPERATION OF CIVIL SERVICE IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, IN CITIZEN'S HOME STATE, AND IN CITIZEN'S HOME COMMUNITY, AS INDICATED BY RESPONSES TO ITEMS 21, 22, AND 23 ON ATTITUDE SCALE USED AT NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR (SEE FIGURE 9)

Classification of Visitors to the Fair Who Responded	Degrees of Favor-Disfavor on Several Statements		
	Item No. 21 (Federal Government)	Item No. 22 (Home State)	Item No. 23 (Home Community)
<i>Total.</i> .....	73	67	65
<i>Location of Response:</i>			
Civil Service Exhibit. ....	74	70*	68*
Public Health Exhibit. ....	73	65	64
<i>Sex:</i>			
Male. ....	73	66	65
Female. ....	75	68	66
<i>Occupational Classification:</i>			
Professional. ....	70*	60†	61*
Proprietor—Farm. ....	65*	59*	60*
Proprietor—Other. ....	74	71*	72*
Housekeeper. ....	77*	68	69*
Salaried—Executive. ....	72	66	61*
Salaried—Minor. ....	74	68	68*
Wages—Factory. ....	77*	67	67
Wages—Other. ....	76*	71*	65
Retired. ....	67*	75*	81*
Unemployed. ....	74	66	68*
Student. ....	74	70*	68*
<i>Total Non-Student.</i> .....	73	66	65

\*A noticeable differential as compared with similar measure for the total sample.

†A significant differential as compared with similar measure for the total sample.

Group measures which differ significantly from comparable total sample measures have been so indicated. In the instance of two or three of these latter measures the odds are only about five to one against the occurrence of such a differential as a matter of chance sampling. For most of them, however, the odds are much more significant, running up to more than trillions to one.

### *Group Attitude on General Questions*

Reference to these tables will show that the total sample was extremely favorable to the merit principle presented generally, as in statement one, "Public employees should be selected through fair competition among all competent persons who wish



to apply" (94 degrees). Moreover, they dropped off only very slightly in their strong favor toward the merit principle stated reversely as in item two, "Public jobs should go to faithful workers of the winning political party" (88 degrees).

The total sample expressed strong favor toward the merit system *apropos* of statement twenty, "The civil service offers an attractive career to capable young people" (79 degrees). They also expressed a very similar degree of strong favor in their reversal of statement fifteen to read, "Salaries of most civil service employees should (not) be reduced" (78 degrees). They were fairly strong in their rejection of the seventh statement, "Promotions in the civil service should be based mainly on seniority" (67 degrees), and in their acceptance of statement eighteen, "Most civil service employees do their jobs efficiently" (67 degrees).

As a total group, they were inclined to accept statement nine, "Public money should be spent to train civil service employees in their jobs" (63 degrees). They were similarly inclined to accept statement thirteen, "Most civil service examinations really determine who is best fitted for the job" (61 degrees), and to reverse statement sixteen to read, "Most civil service jobs are (not) too secure" (61 degrees). A similar degree of favorable inclination was evidenced in their acceptance of statement ten, "Civil service employees should not engage in party politics" (60 degrees).

The total sample expressed considerable doubt about the aspects of the merit system presented by statements four, eight, twelve and fourteen: "Little or no preference should be given to war veterans in getting public jobs" (48 degrees); "College graduates should have a chance to start in the government service at better jobs than high school graduates" (48 degrees); "Civil service agencies do not make strong enough efforts to get good people to take their examinations" (47 degrees); and "Civil service systems usually develop too much red tape" (47 degrees).

They were slightly inclined to accept statement five, "A married person should be denied a position in the civil service if the

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other member of the married couple is already a public employee" (44 degrees), and to accept statement seventeen, "Government employees under civil service tend to forget they are servants of the public" (42 degrees).

They were distinctly inclined to accept statement six that "Civil service employees should have full labor union rights" (38 degrees), to reject statement eleven that "There is little politics and favoritism in the civil service" (38 degrees), and to accept statement nineteen that "Civil service agencies do not keep the public sufficiently informed about their work" (35 degrees).

Finally, their fairly strong acceptance of statement three (29 degrees) doubtless indicates better than does their acceptance of the merit system as a general principle what they would do in actual practice. Statement three reads, "Local government jobs should go to local residents."

### SOME SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

This pattern of opinion is not overly charged with idealism. Thus, the over-all measures indicate that when many particular aspects of merit principle and application are considered, the sample was only slightly inclined to favor the merit system (58 degrees for the first ten items, and 56 degrees for the second ten). This analysis should indicate some of the tasks which public relations men might well undertake. Particularly, they need to work on the widespread attitude that the merit principle should not be given thoroughgoing application when it comes to local jobs. They should attempt to correct either the conditions or the ideas evidenced in the statements about politics and favoritism in the civil service, about the tendency of government employees to forget that they are servants of the people, about red tape developed in civil service systems, and about passive recruitment of examinees. The returns also indicate that several moot questions in civil service practice are equally moot in the minds of these citizens.

Incidentally it is to be noted in Table VIII that the federal service apparently enjoys a slightly higher prestige than do the

state and local services in the minds of this sample group (73 as against 67 and 65 degrees).

The publicity and public relations task is also indicated by differentials among the several groups within the sample. Thus the professional group indicated that they are more favorably inclined than is the average person to the recruitment of college graduates (60 as against a 48 degree general average) and similarly they indicated less respect than did the average student for the state service (60 as against a 67 degree average for the student group).

Inspection of the tables can extend the list of particular tasks needing to be undertaken among particular groups. A similar survey of a representative sample within a particular jurisdiction could give considerable direction to those responsible for the public relations of the personnel agency.

